

**TOP STORY:** *Second coming of the Christian right*

February 8 - 21, 1993

# In THESE TIMES

the alternative newsmagazine

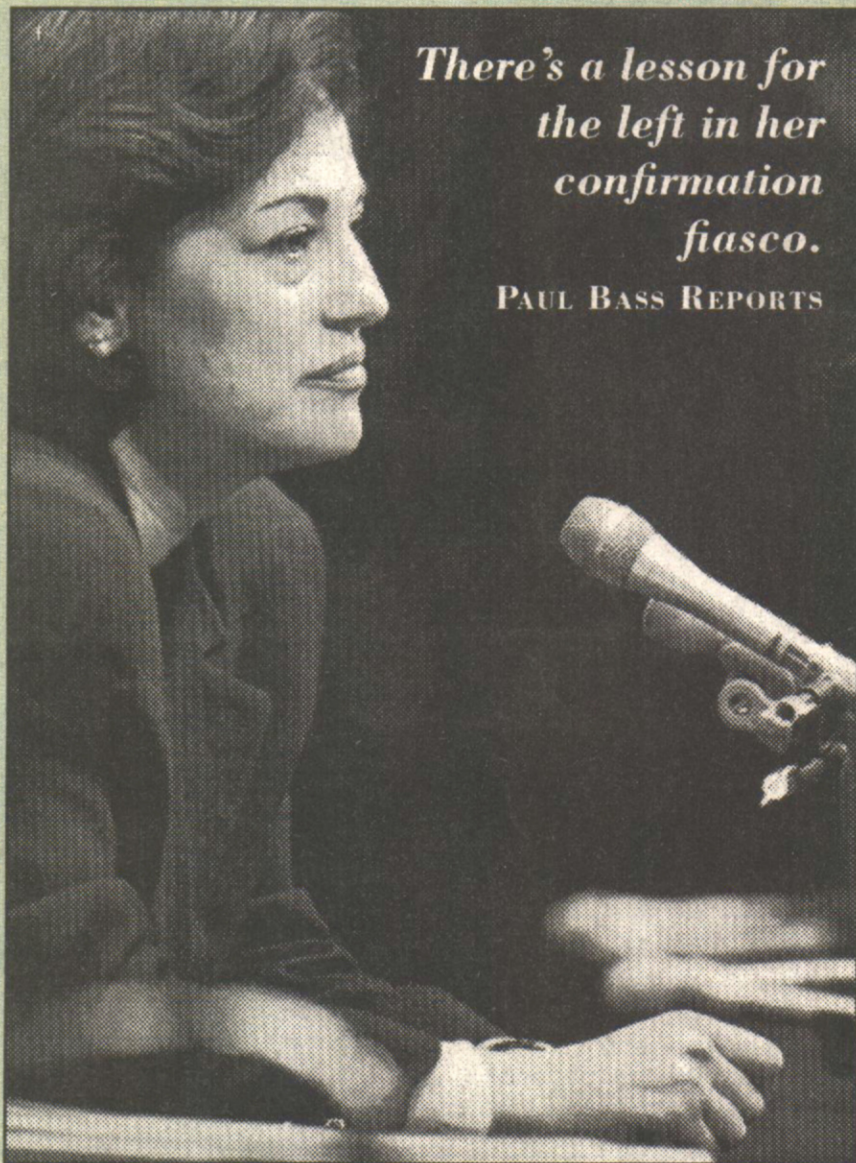
*"If Clinton persists in seeing national service as a massive civics lesson, the program is bound to fail."*

PAGE 26

\$2.50 / CANADA \$3.00



## THE BAIRD FACTS



*There's a lesson for the left in her confirmation fiasco.*

PAUL BASS REPORTS

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# EDITORIAL

## WE NEED YOUR HELP AND WE NEED IT NOW

Without your immediate aid, *In These Times* may soon suffer the fate of *Seven Days*, *Working Papers for a New Society*, *Politics, Democracy*, *New Times* and *The Guardian*, all of which went out of business since we began publishing in 1976. These publications, some old, some new, were victims of political and economic pressures during the Reagan-Bush years, and of the confusion and disillusionment that spread through the American left as the Soviet Union collapsed and free market ideology triumphed temporarily throughout the world.

Many of these failed publications were better-financed than *In These Times*. Indeed, consultants always told us we couldn't survive unless we cut costs drastically. We resisted

*When sixteen  
years of  
begging and  
financial  
crisis caught  
up with us,  
we changed.  
But is it  
too late?*

their advice for several years and confounded our consultants by relying on contributions from our readers to keep us alive. But last year, 16 years of begging and constant financial crisis caught up with us. So we began putting together a new board of directors and hired a new business manager to help us operate more efficiently. To do so, we switched to bi-weekly publication, went to desk-top publishing and cut four staff positions.

Now our operations are closer to break even. But our existence is still threatened by accumulated back debts to the IRS, to freelance writers and to suppliers. And we have two new burdens: our health insurance premiums (which went up from \$44,000 to \$77,000 because one staff member has AIDS) and the mortgage and taxes on our building (because our tenant has not been able to pay the rent for the past four months).

If we were a for-profit business we would have to fold our tents, despite the changes we've made. Yet we are determined to make a go of it because we believe that publications on the left have never been more needed, now that we have a Democratic administration and an opportunity for new directions in domestic and foreign policy.

If the left had a coherent voice today, it could influence policy in many areas. But it is impossible to have an effective left without a means of communication, discussion and information. No political movement has ever succeeded—or even existed—without its own media to help bring diverse groups and individuals together in a common dialogue. Our demise would cripple that process.

So we're asking you to come to our rescue by helping us pay off our life-threatening obligations. If you share our belief in the importance of our work, we hope you will find it possible to mail us a large contribution today. Tax-deductible checks should be sent to *In These Times*, 2040 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60647.

## A TEST OF CHARACTER

There are few areas in which the president has greater personal power than in his role as commander-in-chief of the armed forces. During his campaign, Bill Clinton repeatedly pledged to end the ban on homosexuals in the military. In office, he hoped to give something to the progressive wing of the party without antagonizing his wealthy corporate supporters by making good on this promise.

But the Joint Chiefs of Staff reacted almost as vehemently to Clinton's intention to end discrimination against gays in the military as their counterparts did in 1948, when Harry S. Truman ordered an end to racial segregation in the armed forces. And they used the same arguments.

Encouraged by Les Aspin, the new president's own secretary of defense, Republicans in Congress, along with Democratic friends of the military like Sen. Sam Nunn, joined the Joint Chiefs in dissent. Smelling blood, Senate Minority Leader Robert Dole announced his intention to offer an amendment in support of the existing ban to the first bill considered by the Senate.

As we went to press, Clinton appeared to be holding firm to his intention to suspend the ban on gays while an executive order is prepared outlining a code of conduct for straight and gay military personnel. As commander-in-chief he can hardly do less. The Joint Chiefs are already insubordinate, and Aspin has already undermined him. Giving in would destroy his authority within the government, and it would confirm the feelings of millions of Americans about his character.

As things stand, the American people are about evenly divided on the issue. There is strong opposition, especially from the South and the smaller Western states, just as there was opposition to racial integration from the same regions in 1945. But, as even the ultimate right-wing Republican, Sen. Alfonse D'Amato of New York, points out, "Gays have been in the military and will continue to be in the military." The issue, D'Amato says, is that "the government should not discriminate against any of its citizens." Amen. ◀

## IN THESE TIMES

"...with liberty and justice for all"

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(ISSN 0160-5992)

Published 26 times a year by Institute for Public Affairs,  
 2060 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60647, (312) 772-  
 0100. Member: Alternative Press Syndicate The entire  
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 International, Ann Arbor, MI. Selected articles are  
 available on 4-track cassette from Freedom Ideas  
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 Alternative Press Index and the Left Index. Publisher  
 does not assume liability for unsolicited manuscripts or  
 material. Manuscripts or material unaccompanied by  
 stamped, self-addressed envelope will not be returned.  
 All correspondence should be sent to: *In These Times*,  
 2060 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60647.  
 Subscriptions are \$34.95 a year (\$59 for institutions;  
 \$31.95 Canada; \$75.95 overseas). For customer service  
 and to place subscription orders, call toll free: (800) 827-  
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 issues are \$5 each; specify volume and number. All  
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 IL and at additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send  
 address changes to *In These Times*, 1912 Debs Ave., Mt.  
 Morris, IL 61054.  
 This issue (Vol. 17, No. 6) published Feb. 8, 1993, for  
 newsstand sales Feb. 8 - 21, 1993.



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# LETTERS

## Trickle out

I lived in Pittsburgh from 1966 to 1970 and was impressed by the way industrial wealth had cleaned up Pittsburgh into a pleasant environment, while leaving Homestead in environmental blight.

Although one hopes the Homestead environment improved during the '70s and '80s, I suspect that little money was found for such projects. A possible silver lining to its economic cloud (described in David Moberg's review of William Serrin's book, Jan. 11) is, now that much of its population has dwindled away, perhaps those who are left can find some urban renewal grants to make Homestead a nicer place to live.

Frank N. Egerton

Professor of Environmental History  
University of Wisconsin-Parkside  
Kenosha, Wis.

## Pontificating novelist

Stating the obvious does not a prophet make! Nuruddin Farah (*ITT*, Dec. 28) was hardly the first to be aware of the impending doom of Siad Barre's self-serving and vicious authoritarian habits. Blaming Yoweri Museveni is absurd. If blaming is in order, where were the other Islamic leaders of the world? Where are they now (other than the Iranian-backed fundamentalist terrorists, who seem to be making their presence felt)?

Museveni led a successful internal grass-roots movement in his own country. Because of his incredible ability to include all factions (in a multi-tribal and multi-religious country) in a postwar Uganda government, he stimulated the evolution of a genuine process for democratic participation (in which women have played a major

role, as well).

A pontificating novelist telling the chairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1991 to drop the tradition of non-interference in a fellow African country that has a sitting, "legitimate," albeit horrid, head of state is outrageously self-aggrandizing. "This didn't have to happen" if the people of Somalia like Nuruddin Farah who were forced to flee (or those who chose to and could afford to leave) didn't do more than question others and lament. Must someone remind Farah that Yoweri Museveni was a college-educated economist who twice organized refugees and victims of Idi Amin and Milton Obote in order to oust the self-serving dictators and create a civilized country?

It is not the OAU or the United Nations that should create Somalia—if there is to be one. It is Somalis who have the intelligence and commitment and the compassion who must go home and teach and work together. Obviously, Farah is not into personal sacrifice for the good of his countrymen and women.

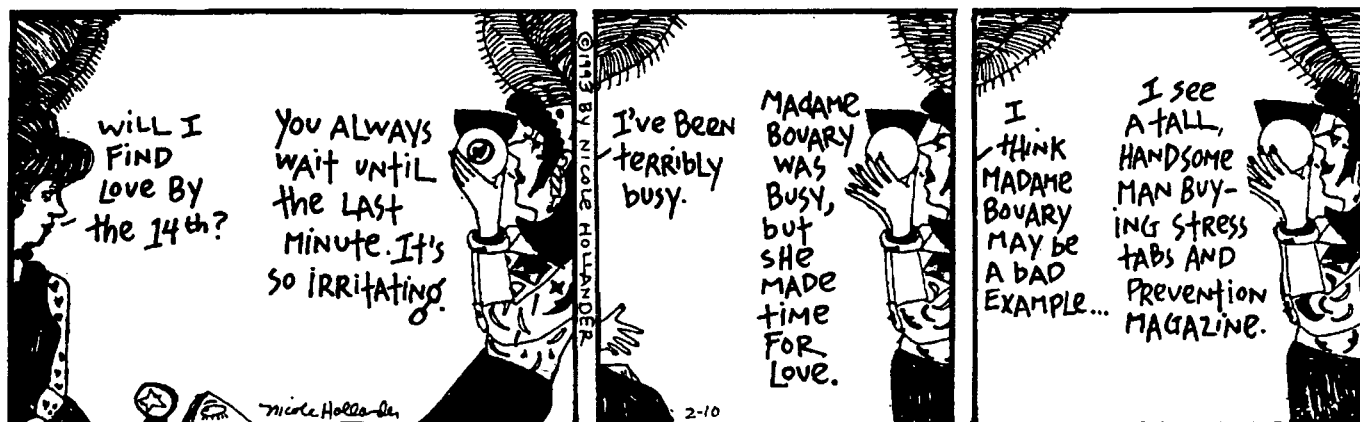
Dee Aker  
San Diego

## Intifada

Five years have passed since the intifada, the Palestinian uprising, broke out in December 1987 as a spontaneous and general declaration

SYLVIA

by Nicole Hollander





of Palestinians in areas under Israeli military rule that they would no longer live under illegal occupation. Five years later, Palestinians continue to struggle under a harsh and repressive Israeli military occupation.

In the first three months of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's government, 29 people were shot dead by Israeli Defense Forces, nearly 1,000 acres of Palestinian land were confiscated, over 1,600 Palestinian trees and grapevines were uprooted and 64 Palestinian homes were sealed shut or destroyed. In addition, the government of Israel has given approval for the completion of more than 10,000 illegal housing units in the West Bank alone.

The recent expulsion of over 400 Palestinians from the West Bank in Gaza only adds to the growing list of violations of international law and human rights by the government of Israel.

The latest phase of the peace process has done little to improve the lives of Palestinians living under the illegal occupation of the state of Israel. Without substantial changes it will be increasingly difficult for Palestinians to

remain engaged in a process that only prolongs the occupation.

A change in U.S. policy toward the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is long overdue. It is time to move the dialogue beyond simple pro-Israel or pro-Arab positions. U.S. policy toward the Palestinian-Israeli conflict must be guided by the genuine human concerns of both Palestinians and Israelis.

A lasting peace in the region can only come about by recognizing the right of both peoples to self-determination, security and international recognition.

**Terry Rempel**

Synapses Middle East Program  
Chicago

## Keep on trucking

I don't suppose that trying to educate you guys does any good, but let's try again.

When Paul Hockenos advocates bombing the shit out of targets that he selects in Bosnia to teach the Serbians that *might* doesn't make *right*, illogic is carried to absurdity. Moreover, the

record of U.S. interference in foreign disputes has been appalling since World War II.

Let's just keep it home this time, fellas.

**Robert C. Sommer**  
New York

## Amen

Your editorial, "The doors are opening, but what's inside?" (*ITT*, Jan 11), has a lot of history to back it up. Historian James MacGregor Burns, in his *The Crosswinds of Freedom, From Roosevelt to Reagan*, points out that both the labor movement of the '30s and the civil rights movement of the '60s did not come about on the initiatives of Roosevelt or Kennedy. Both presidents, says MacGregor, at first looked askance at such controversial developments.

Roosevelt, from rural upstate New York, had little experience with unions. When the newly organized Committee for Industrial Organization (CIO) battled the then largest corporation in the world (General Motors) to a standstill, Roosevelt responded with "a plague on both your houses."

Kennedy, very averse to touch such a political hot potato as race, was forced by the tremendous civil rights movement to do so eventually—especially after the photos of Birmingham police attacking the demonstrators with police dogs and firehoses went live all over the world—contradicting the rhetoric of freedom he was proclaiming.

Only a large-scale social movement winning hard-fought battles ever brings significant change.

**Gregory Bergman**  
Berkeley, Calif.

**Editor's note:** Please try to keep letters under 250 words in length. Otherwise we may have to make drastic cuts, which may change what you wished to say. Also, if possible, please type and double-space letters—or at least write clearly and with wide margins.



# InSHORT



Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy

## CLINTON'S AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

*Some appointees are more equal than others.*

American women who might be qualified for cabinet-level positions. Gays found themselves in a privileged minority for once.

But in its operations, Clinton's administration may not differ markedly

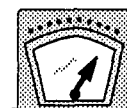
Bill Clinton went out of his way to appoint a cabinet that reflected the sexual and ethnic makeup of the country and the Democratic Party. Policy experts in Washington got calls from Clinton transition staff asking if they knew of any Asian-



By Woody Igou

### No MSG, please

Dissident writer Zheng Yi has smuggled documents out of China showing that wide-



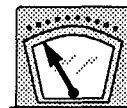
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spread cannibalism was practiced in the Guangxi Province in

southern China in the late '60s. It appears to be the first outbreak of ideological cannibalism, since those dining were not compelled by hunger or mental illness to consume their fellow citizens. "Sir Watkins, the Hong Kong Treaty has finally been translated from the Chinese. ... Oh, my God ... it's not a treaty ... it's a cookbook!"

### My name is Bill, and I have logorrhea

President Clinton engaged in and lost a grammatical showdown over his statements to a



2.8

New York Times reporter that gave the appearance of a policy of

appeasement toward Saddam Hussein, including the possibility that the "new Hitler" could engage in deathbed conversions. This statement was later "clarified" and brought back in line with current U.S. policy.

Move over James Monroe, it's going to be the "Era of Good Sentence Diagramming."

## Luxury taxes

The American Heart Association reports that heart disease



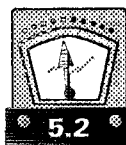
will cost the United States \$117.4 billion this year in treatment and lost produc-

tivity. Heart disease accounts for 43 percent of all deaths in the country, and 70 million Americans have some form of heart disease.

*New Hollywood thriller: Fatal Abundance.*

## Nicholson told me to

*Navy News* reports that four sailors were charged with assaulting and injuring two female sailors during a prank



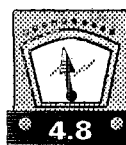
known as "Mac Truck," which involved shining light into the victims' eyes and

then hitting them with pillows. The commander in charge stated that "this is not a sexual harassment incident."

*An equal mayhem employer, at last.*

## Nixon's still waiting

The *European Express* reports that late Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev is poised for a come-



back. A record number of Russians showed up in memory of his Era of Stagnation.

And a recent poll showed him to be the most popular Russian leader of all time.

*Right, and turnips are still the most popular vegetable.*

## APPALL-O-METER SCALE

1. Weightless banality
2. Green Acres stupid
3. Malicious cretinism
4. Howard Sternesque
5. Mary Matalin mean
6. Congenious venality
7. A touch of evil
8. A cancer in the Zeitgeist
9. No 20, Pol Pot?
10. Horseperson of the Apocalypse

from its predecessors. According to a source close to the transition, some cabinet appointees are more equal than others. Clinton and his top transition officials have reserved to themselves the right to appoint the top subordinates for black Rep. Michael Espy, Clinton's secretary of agriculture, and for Donna Shalala, the head of the Department of Health and Human Services. Secretary of Labor Robert Reich, by contrast, has been allowed to choose all his top aides.

—John B. Judis

## TROUBLE IN TENNESSEE

*At Oak Ridge, they care more about news leaks than toxic ones*

The government's nuclear facility at Oak Ridge, Tenn., got its start in the fission biz by supplying the uranium for Little Boy, the bomb that killed 130,000 people in Hiroshima. And human life still doesn't mean much in Oak Ridge. In late December, 19 workers at a Department of Energy laboratory

were contaminated with radioactive waste.

According to *Corporate Crime Reporter*, the contaminated workers were carpenters who were exposed to a pipe leaking radioactive cesium-137 at a laboratory building contracted by Martin Marietta. Prior to working on the project, they reportedly had been told that the area was clean of radioactivity.

"Cesium has a half-life of right about 30 years," Jackie Kittrell, a Knoxville attorney who represents whistle-blowers at the Oak Ridge Laboratory, told *Corporate Crime Reporter*. "It probably won't get out of the body of an adult before they die. ... The health effects won't be known for another five or ten years."

The contamination followed the case of Charles "Bud" Varnadore, an employee who complained in 1986 about health and safety problems in the same Martin Marietta building where the recent leak took place. Varnadore alleged that Martin Marietta management retaliated against him and forced him to work in a room with toxic waste. According to Kittrell, workers involved in the recent contamination case "have been threatened very unequivocally, but very implicitly, that they better keep their mouth shut."

That news probably comes as no surprise to William K. Reid, an Oak Ridge physician. Last spring, *In These Times* reported that Reid noticed many of his patients had high levels of cancer-causing heavy metals that are used in nuclear weapons production. (See *In These Times*, April 22, 1992.) Reid's superiors at Methodist Medical Center initiated professional action against him shortly after he began investigating links between his patients' health problems and releases of mercury from Oak Ridge. And guess what big arms manufacturer has close ties to the hospital. Martin Marietta.

Now the Department of Labor has granted Reid protection from job discrimination under the federal whistle-blowers act, according to the *New York Times*. Reid had appealed to the department, claiming that the hospital started a medical peer review of his treatments in an effort to quiet him. A Labor Department investigator found no evidence that the hospital's review was related to the doctor's assertions about the nuclear plants. But he did rule that Reid qualified as a whistle-blower under the law. That status gives him the right to appeal to a federal administrative law judge. If Reid can prove the discriminatory action by the hospital, he can now win damages.

—Miles Harvey and Kei Maruyama

## THE WRONG MAN

*Incinerator proponent  
up for key EPA post*

Environmentalists in the Southeast have been organizing against the possible appointment of an incinerator proponent as chief of the Environmental Protection Agency's regional office in Atlanta.

G. Robert Kerr, head of Georgia's Hazardous Waste Management Authority, reportedly is on the inside track for the job and has the support of Georgia Gov. Zell Miller and Georgia Sen. Sam Nunn—both of whom threw their political weight into Clinton's campaign.

"Appointing Kerr would be like having a communist president or an atheist pope. That's how much he has in common with the environment," says Debbie Buckner, a resident of Talbot County, Georgia. Buckner and her neighbors battled Kerr for five years over a proposed hazardous waste incinerator that would have been located a few miles from her home. Environmentalists not only prevailed in that battle, but they also proved Georgia doesn't generate enough hazardous waste to warrant an incinerator anywhere in the state.

Kerr used to be something of a wolf in sheep's clothing. He was the executive director of the Nature Conservancy while he was flacking for the incinerator. Not surprisingly, he resigned from that position under a cloud.

His allegiances are no secret today. "Kerr is close with some of the major polluters in the state and with the people who are known for making it easy for polluters to get permits," Buckner says. She fears that Kerr, as regional head of the EPA, would relax environmental regulations.

Opposition to his appointment is coming from grass-roots groups, fishing groups and national environmental organizations. Georgians have contacted like-minded people in other states in their EPA region. They have flooded Nunn's office with phone calls and letters, and have expressed their concern to Clinton's transition team and to Carol Browner, the new EPA director and former aide to Al Gore.

Kerr opponent Renee Butterworth, an environmental leader in Louisville, Ky., says she wants an improvement over the outgoing regional director, Greer Tidwell. "He's never decided for the environmentalists yet," Butterworth says. "We're looking at this Clinton-Gore era as a new era."

Buckner is not ready to say Kerr's rising star indicates Gore's failure to put a green mark on the new administration. "The verdict is still out on that," she says. As to whether Kerr's appointment can be stopped, she says, "It seems like everything in the environmental realm is an uphill battle, but I also know we can win. We have before."

—Robin Epstein

## TRADING PLACES

*With Clinton in,  
critics hope NAFTA is out*

With Bill Clinton in the White House, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the opposition to it both enter a period of political limbo. Clinton endorsed

the treaty but argued that it was inadequate, especially with regard to the environment and worker rights. But the majority of new members of Congress—and, according to a pre-election *Wall Street Journal* poll, two-thirds of those Americans who were familiar with NAFTA—oppose the treaty.

NAFTA critics hope to derail Bush's agreement and substitute a better,

## MEDIA BEAT

By Pat Aufderheide

### A piece of the action

In a country where populism equates with commercialism, why shouldn't the president's inauguration be licensed like *Aladdin* and *Malcolm X*? (Both movies have more than 100 related products for sale. *Aladdin*'s include boxer shorts and board games. *Malcolm X* has everything from automobile air fresheners to statuettes and sunglasses.)

The Clinton-Gore Inaugural has been mementolized with golf balls, tie tacks, champagne and even pillow cases. Meanwhile, corporations from Coke to GM angled a way to get product endorsement out of the event. Of course. The highly televised inaugural week (sold to four cable channels as well as to CBS) offered golden opportunities for marketers. Some see this process as demeaning a political ritual. But it might well be argued that it's an appropriate sign of the arrival of the baby-boom generation—the generation that pioneered commercial youth culture.

### Infomercials on radio

Long prohibited, infomercials—program-length commercials—crept into television with the expansion of channels, accompanied by loosened regulation, in the '80s. Consumer advocates protest that consumers are often gulled into believing that



**hype is fact, but the regulators have shrugged and pointed to the "off" button on the television. Now the form is migrating to radio as well. One business-news Washington, D.C., radio station lets stockbrokers and real estate investors on air—for a fee—to tout their views and services under the cover of offering small investor advice. The new programmers like the format because it gives them "credibility," as one told the *Washington Post*. Of course it does—anyone who misses the occasional announcement thinks the program is legitimate news.**

### **Just the facts**

**More bold demonstrations of the marriage between ratings and broadcasters' news choices: In a memo from the news director of WTSP in Tampa-St. Petersburg—published in *Harper's*—the sports staff is ordered to "emphasize U.S. Olympic losses and/or disappointments" because "the more disappointment that we can tell viewers about, the more people may not be inclined to watch as much prime-time Olympic coverage on [rival] Channel 8." The memo comes at a time when, as was noted in *Electronic Media*, ads for news directors call for someone "in sync with the sales objectives of the station" and willing "to help develop modules and series with sales potential."**

© 1993 Pat Aufderheide

more comprehensive North American development agreement. They plan to build up the already substantial grass-roots opposition to the treaty, and to hold Clinton accountable to his own professed ideals. In December, critics sent Clinton a letter detailing how his campaign pledges clashed with NAFTA provisions on 13 essential points.

Next month, Jesse Jackson, working with the Fair Trade Campaign—a broad labor, community, farm, consumer and environmental coalition—will conduct a tour through Canada, the United States and Mexico, drawing attention to problems with NAFTA. Ross Perot's newly revived supporters are circulating anti-NAFTA petitions. More opposition groups are emerging, ranging from a new student-youth network (mainly focused on environmental and human rights issues) to the Milwaukee City Council, which in a recent vote unanimously urged its Washington representative to oppose NAFTA.

Although some grass-roots groups, especially those dominated by local industrial unions, favor flat-out opposition to NAFTA, most organizations are trying to develop alternative models of North American integration that will not give big business a free hand.

Since most opponents are linked in some way to the Democrats, fighting Clinton on the issue is tricky. Most critics don't believe NAFTA can be amended adequately, even to meet Clinton's objections, let alone to take into account the treaty's many other problems (such as those that affect small farmers in all three countries, a subject Clinton has ignored). But they will fight against NAFTA as a whole, while at the same time pushing for new side agreements and amendments to the existing treaty. In the end, they hope that popular discontent will persuade Clinton to abandon what Fair Trade Campaign co-director Don Wiener continues to pointedly call "Bush's NAFTA."

—David Moberg

## **ORGANIZING THE ORGANIZERS**

*A new trade association for professional activists*

Nearly all working people have a trade association dedicated to the concerns of their profession. Now, finally, a trade association is being formed for political organizers.

Twenty-six community and labor organizers from all over the country created the National Organizers Alliance at a meeting in Oakland late last year. The group plans to develop employment standards for organizers and promote organizing as a career. A newsletter also is in the works and the group hopes to draw 500 career organizers to a meeting in the summer of 1994.

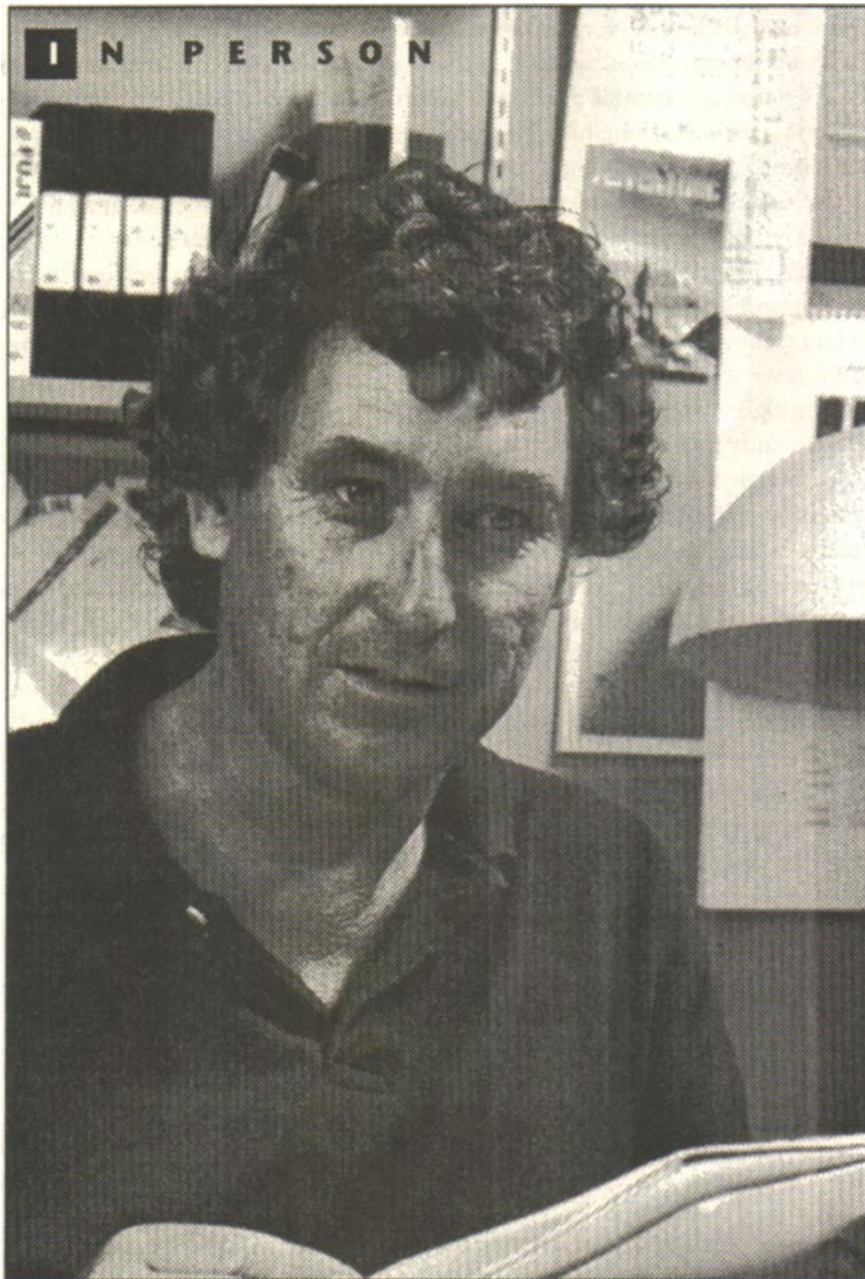
"People don't have a sense of what an organizer is. It's not a recognized occupation," said Cathy Howell of Grassroots Leadership, a regional organizing center based in Charlotte, N.C. "We want people to understand organizing and view it as necessary for democratic society."

By improving working conditions for organizers, the group hopes to curtail the burn-out and turnover that plague the profession. Organizers get low pay and often lack benefits such as health insurance, pension plans and sabbaticals.

Howell said the National Organizers Association is not primarily intended as a catalyst for uniting groups working on diverse issues. But, she added, "as we get to know each other more, our organizations will form relationships too."

Organizers interested in getting on the mailing list can call Kim Fellner at (212) 795-7654.

—Robin Epstein



Frontline/Julie Nestingen

## ON THE FRONTLINE

*David Fanning sets the standard for investigative television*

of Capetown, South Africa. That was in the 1968. Next week, on Tuesday, February 9, Fanning, in his role as the executive producer of *Frontline*, will continue that tradition with an exposé of how J. Edgar Hoover's love affair with Clyde Tolson, his senior aide at the FBI, left the FBI director open to blackmail by the Mafia.

In the time between his student days at Capetown and his present job at *Frontline*, the nation's premier investigative news show, Fanning, a South African of English descent, worked for Britain's BBC, which he found "bureaucratic, incestuous and elitist." Fleeing England, which he characterizes

"In my first issue I exposed a spy on campus, a so-called poet whose photo we found in a police year-book," says David Fanning, the one-time editor of *The Varsity*, the student newspaper of the University

## ETC.

By Miles Harvey

### The new math

Among the many refrains Bill Clinton intoned during his presidential campaign, one was music to all voters' ears: jobs, jobs, jobs. On January 25 the federal government released a study that said 12,000 new jobs could be created by shifting \$3 billion from military industries to state and local jurisdictions. The same day, however, Sears, Roebuck & Company announced that it would soon carve 50,000 jobs from its payroll. Hey, Bill, nobody ever said it was gonna be easy.

### The old math

Executives at US Sprint are hearing a lot of unwanted static these days—but it's not from the long-distance phone company's fiber-optic system. It's from the employees, who are trying to organize a union with the help of the Communications Workers of America (CWA). For its part, the United Telecom-owned company has distributed a "highly restricted" internal document, titled "US Sprint Union-Free Management Guide." This union-busting-made-simple booklet includes a section titled "What Every Employee Needs to Know About Unions—And You Should Be Prepared to Tell Them." Managers are urged to instruct workers that "under a union contract there may be a loss of reward based on individual merit because everybody gets the same." And US Sprint execs certainly don't want everybody to get the same. United Telecom's top executive officer, William Esrey, made over \$2.1 million in



1990, according to *Forbes* magazine. That's 104 times as much as the top-paid Sprint operator, according to the CWA.

## The old math II

The Stateway Gardens area on Chicago's south side is only five miles from the lower Gold Coast neighborhood on the near north side. But the two sections of the city are worlds apart. In Stateway Gardens, the per capita income is \$1,650—50 times less than the \$82,169 per capita income of the lower Gold Coast. These numbers come from census analysis by urbanologist Pierre deVise. He also found that, between 1980 and 1990, per capita income in the city's 10 richest neighborhoods grew by 53 percent, while falling by 30 percent in the 10 poorest areas.

## Pressing the issues

The media watchdog group Project Censored recently announced its annual listing of key news stories that the national media largely failed to cover. In *These Times* had three of the top 25 under-reported stories of 1992. Finishing sixth was Mike Males' report about how drug deaths in the U.S. skyrocketed despite the Reagan-Bush "war on drugs." James Weinstein's editorial about governmental red tape and the solar power industry—later reprinted in the *Christian Science Monitor*—finished 11th. And Joel Bleifuss' report on how the Environmental Protection Agency discourages employees from protecting the environment finished 12th.

as "narrow, cautious and repressed," Fanning made his way in late 1972 to sunny Southern California and a small public TV station in Huntington Beach, KOCE. From there it was on to Boston's Public Broadcasting System affiliate WGBH, *Frontline*'s parent station.

Throughout the '80s, as the networks were perfecting 15-minute documentary news format, *Frontline* consistently put out hour-long programs that probed topics in depth. It was the only news show that critically examined the major political scandals of the Reagan and Bush administrations, including Iran-contra, the October Surprise, the S&L debacle and Iraqgate. Fanning says that because *Frontline* has been covering "the business of power, who wields it and how they wield it, our analysis has, by necessity, been fairly critical through out the past decade."

The one topic he regrets not devoting a show to is Ronald Reagan's mental competence, or lack thereof. The fact that for a good part of his presidency, Reagan was, in Fanning's words, "gaga," is still one of the unreported stories of the '80s.

For its exposés, *Frontline* has been fiercely attacked by Republican congressmen, White House operatives and the apologist pundits who once reigned in Washington.

"Perhaps I'm naive, but we go about the business of making *Frontline* without paying attention to the political attacks," says Fanning. "We think the most important thing was to make independent decisions, to make editorial judgments without conforming to anybody else's political agenda, on the right or left. I don't think that's naiveté, but perhaps sitting outside of Washington helps."

Fanning resists being ideologically pegged as a left-leaning programmer. "I would like to think we are more independent than that," he says. "We have done programs that are revisionist." He points to *Frontline* investigations that should have been applauded by his Republican detractors, like the February 1991 exposé on Castro's links to the cocaine cartel.

But Fanning has been attacked before, and he will be again. The harshest criticism came for "Death of a Princess" the 1980 documentary he co-wrote and produced that examined circumstances around the Saudi royal family's execution of a young family member who had committed adultery. The royal family and their retainers in Congress went on the attack, and Warren Christopher, then an undersecretary of state, lobbied PBS to cancel the program. "That toughened me," says Fanning. "No assault on us will match that."

Mucking around political dirt is one thing. Presenting what is dug up in a way that glues viewers to their seats is another. "In the end, television is an entertainment media. We've got 60 minutes to tell a story with no breaks. It's the toughest job in television, selling a documentary to an audience. People have a short attention span."

"The Secret File on J. Edgar Hoover" will be one of the easier ones to sell to the public. The program promises to provide "an inside view of how Hoover fought off the Kennedys using his ample dossier on the philandering president and includes startling new evidence on how Hoover had pressured the Kennedys to select his protégé, Lyndon Johnson, as vice president." Once again, *Frontline* will make its mark, further solidifying its position as the investigative news program of record.

"I have, quite simply, the best job in television," says Fanning. As the creator of *Frontline*, that is his quiet way of bragging.

—Joel Bleifuss

# T H E F I R S T S T O N E

## SEE NO EVIL

By Joel Bleifuss

**T**he House of Representatives got one thing right when it released the findings of its October Surprise Task Force last month. The 968-page report is bound in white cardboard—an appropriate choice for a whitewash.

The Task Force purports to demonstrate there is no substance to the allegations that 1980 Reagan-Bush campaign officials conspired with Iranians prior to that year's presidential election. The report does cover new ground, filling in the documentary record, yet it does not resolve several key issues. In fact, the Task Force obfuscates the October Surprise inquiry through contorted arguments that ignore its own findings.

The Task Force concluded that there is "no credible evidence" that the Reagan-Bush campaign attempted to delay the release of the 52 American hostages in Iran. But on the question of whether the Reagan-Bush campaign officials met with Iranian representatives, the Task Force was less absolute. The evidence that such meetings occurred, according to the Task Force, was "wholly insufficient."

That phrase would be better applied to the Task Force itself, particularly regarding its answer to the crucial question: Did 1980 Reagan-Bush campaign chief William Casey hold secret meetings with representatives of the Ayatollah Khomeini in Europe?

If Casey did not meet with the Iranians, there was no October Surprise deal. If, on the other hand, it can be shown that he did hold secret meetings with Iranian representatives prior to the 1980 election, an October Surprise deal is a distinct possibility. Consequently, Casey's whereabouts in the months leading up to the 1980 election should assume primary importance in any fair-minded investigation of the October Surprise. For its part, the Task Force devotes one-third of its report to examining the allegations that Casey held secret meetings in Europe with Iranians.

After investigating Casey's whereabouts in the summer and fall of 1980, the Task Force concluded he did not

attend such meetings. That finding was reiterated in a January 24 *New York Times* op-ed column by Lee Hamilton, through his ghost writer Chris Madison, formerly of the conservative *National Journal*. But evidence presented by the Task Force militates against any such conclusion. On the contrary, the evidence indicates Casey could well have been in Europe—and that Hamilton apparently has not read his own report.

Iranian arms dealer Jamshid Hashemi has alleged that he met Casey and an Iranian representative in Madrid in late July 1980 and again that August to discuss the hostages. Hotel records in Madrid indicate that Jamshid Hashemi was in Madrid between July 25 and August 13. So where was Casey?

The Task Force details Casey's whereabouts between July 26 and August 3, 1980. Casey disappeared from public view between the afternoon of July 26 and the afternoon of July 28. Perhaps not coincidentally, the pages from Casey's desk calendar for July 26 and 27 were discovered missing from his files. Hence, it was possible for Casey to have attended two meetings in Madrid, as Jamshid Hashemi alleged.

The Task Force, however, decided that Casey could not have been in Madrid on July 26 and 27 because he was allegedly at the Bohemian Grove, a male-only ruling-class retreat north of San Francisco.

The Task Force based its conclusion on the recollection of one of Casey's colleagues in the 1980 Reagan-Bush campaign, Darrell Trent. According to the Task Force report, Trent "was uncertain whether Casey was his guest [at the Bohemian Grove] during the second [weekend of July 26-27] or third [and final] weekend [of August 2-3] ... but his best recollection was that he and Casey attended the retreat during the second [weekend of July 26-27]."

Judging from the evidence the Task Force uncovered, and then disregarded, Casey was clearly at the Bohemian Grove on August 1-3 and not the days of July 25-27, as the Task Force contends.

- Casey, through verification of his appointment schedule and credit card receipts, has been placed in Washington and then New York on the days of July 25 and July 26.

- The August 1 page of Casey's desk calendar reads "L.A."

- The August 2 *Washington Star* reported that on August 1, candidate Ronald Reagan met with his campaign staff in Los Angeles.

- Campaign official Richard Allen provided the Task Force with meeting notes that indicate both Casey and Trent attended that Friday, 10 a.m. meeting.

- Trent told the Task Force that he remembered meeting Casey in Los Angeles and traveling with him to the Bohemian Grove.



•According to Bohemian Grove expense records, on August 1, both Trent and Casey incurred a \$9.00 charge on their Bohemian Grove accounts for a "Playbook."

•On August 3, 1980, camp participant Matthew McGowan wrote in his diary: "1980 Bohemian Grove encampment closed this date. A very good encampment for me. We had Bill Casey, Gov. Reagan's campaign mgr., as our guest this last weekend."

Rather than look at the evidence, the Task Force investigators chose to cook it. They endorsed Trent's "uncertain" recollection that Casey attended the camp on the previous weekend. For the Task Force to have done otherwise would have destroyed its alibi for Casey during the weekend of July 26-27 and thus given credibility to the allegations that Casey was in Madrid meeting with Iranians.

In a similar way, the Task Force manipulates Casey's whereabouts on the weekend of October 18-19, 1980, a time period during which it has been alleged that meetings were held in Paris between 1980 Reagan-Bush campaign officials and representatives of Iran. Casey's whereabouts on October 19 are unknown. But according to the Task Force report, Casey's nephew Larry told them that he recalls his father receiving a phone call from his Uncle William on October 19. This same nephew had previously claimed on camera to *Frontline* that Casey had dinner in Washington with his parents on October 19; it was later proved that this dinner actually occurred on October 15.

In fact, rather than disprove the Paris allegations, the Task Force uncovered new evidence that lends credence to the allegation that Casey was in Paris that weekend, specifically testimony from two journalists who have ties to the French intelligence community.

Claude Angeli, chief editor for *Canard Enchaîné*, a French newspaper, told the Task Force that French intelligence officials, who refused to go on the record, told him that French intelligence (SDECE) provided "cover" for a meeting between representatives of the 1980 Reagan-Bush campaign and Iranians in Paris between October 18-19, 1980. According to the report, Angeli said that his sources alleged that Alexandre de Marenches, the former head of SDECE, "utilized a select group of loyal intelligence operatives, hand-selected because de Marenches could count on their strict confidentiality" to "provide security for a meeting so that its substance and existence would remain secret."

In a conversation last week Angeli told me, "I am sure that the meeting in France between the Iranians and the

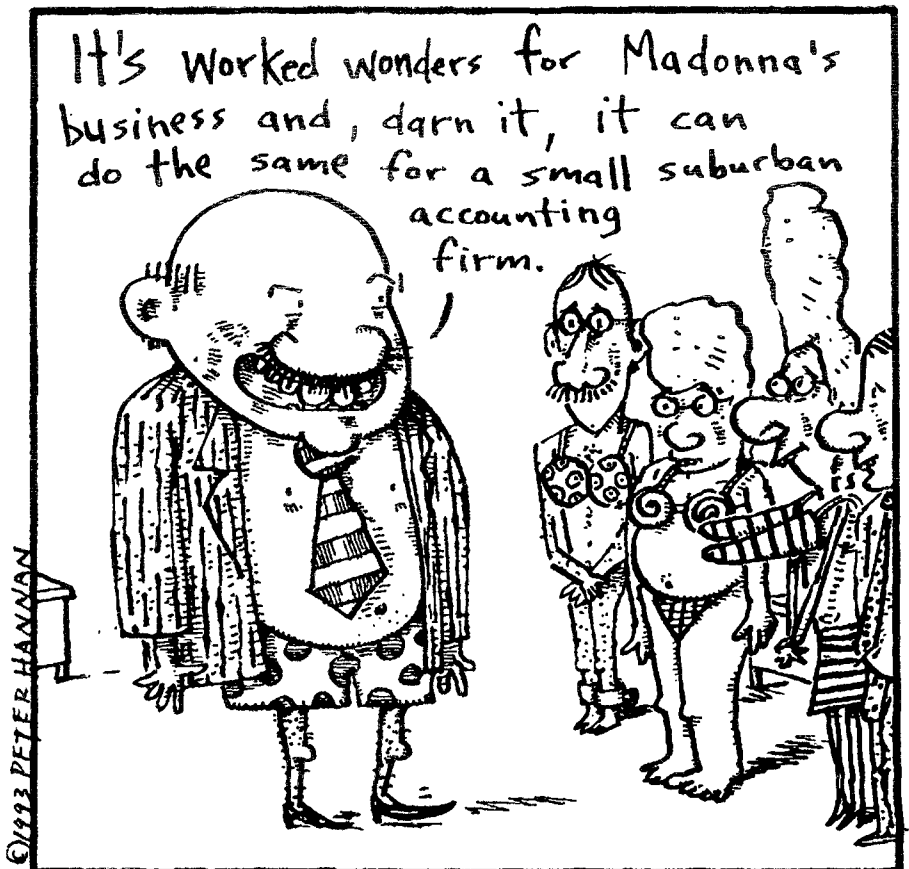
Reagan crew happened. But I can't write about that because I can't prove it. I had conversations with officials, but off the record, and I can't use their names." Angeli said that he was told the meeting was held at the Plaza Athénée hotel in Paris.

De Marenches denied knowledge of such Paris meetings when the Task Force investigators interviewed him. But corroboration of Angeli's allegations comes from American David Andelman, the former *New York Times* and CBS reporter who was de Marenches' official biographer. Andelman told the Task Force that "de Marenches acknowledged setting up a meeting in Paris between Casey and some Iranians in late October 1980." Andelman said that de Marenches told him this off the record and did not want it included in his biography.

For all its volume, for the \$1.35 million spent, for all the new information revealed, the Task Force report failed abysmally to honestly examine the whereabouts of William Casey. Was this failure due to the incompetence of the investigating team, or was there a conscious decision to mount a cover-up? In my next column I will look at the checkered record of the man who headed up the investigation, Chief Counsel Larry Barcella. His former boss, former U.S. Attorney Joseph di Genova, once told a reporter, "Larry was sought out by a lot of people in intelligence" because he was "creative."

## THE ADVENTURES OF A HUGE MOUTH

by Peter Hannan



## FOREIGN POLICY

# Time bomb

*If Clinton doesn't change course on Iraq soon, he'll never get around to drafting a domestic policy.*

By John B. Judis  
WASHINGTON D.C.

D

uring his presidential campaign, Bill Clinton promised that he would not repeat George Bush's mistake of paying more attention to Basra than to Buffalo. "Now that we have changed the world, it's time to change America," he declared in accepting his party's nomination. But his first week of office was taken up with bombing raids on Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein's anti-aircraft installations.

To some extent, Clinton's foray into military geopolitics was unavoidable. He inherited a festering situation in Iraq and the Middle East that demanded attention. But the question is what kind of attention did it deserve. After Clinton was slapped down hard for suggesting a change in American policy, he embraced Bush's strategy of military escalation aimed at unseating Saddam Hussein. That could prove dangerous—not so much for the

American military, but for American policy in the Middle East and for an administration that aspires to "change America."

Clinton does have a choice of strategies. As Clinton's own fleeting dissent made clear, two different approaches to dealing with Iraq emerged in the wake of the decisive allied victory in Operation Desert Storm. One is associated with the United Nations and such Desert Storm allies as Egypt. The other has come from the Bush administration and has been supported by the British and French governments. These two strategies have sometimes converged in practice, but they are based on fundamentally different assumptions.

The U.N. strategy has consisted of trying to eliminate Iraq's capacity to wage war against its neighbors, while also seeking to reduce Hussein's ability to repress his Kurdish and Shi'ite opposition. It does not seek his removal, but rather a return to the *status quo ante bellum*, albeit with a weakened Iraq and Hussein. If it has an ultimate objective, it is the restoration of the balance of power in the region.

Last year the U.N. Security Council passed resolutions requiring Iraq, among other things, to cooperate with the U.N. in identifying and destroying weapons of mass destruction and the facilities where they were made, to reveal the foreign suppliers of advanced military technology, to compensate victims of Iraq's aggression through oil sales and to end repression of—and permit humanitarian assistance to—the regime's opponents.

The U.N. has had two means of assuring Iraq's compliance: economic sanctions, which will not be removed until Iraq has satisfied the terms of the resolutions, and military force. But it remains unclear when force is authorized. While the resolutions concerned with Iraqi weaponry fall under that part of the U.N. charter that permits military action, the resolution calling on Iraq to end domestic repression does not. In part, this is a fine point of U.N. constitutionalism, but it also impinges on basic strategic considerations: the U.N. has historically envisaged its role as enforcing collective security between nations, not within nations.

In contrast, the Bush administration has based its strategy on getting rid of Hussein. When he was not overthrown after his military defeat, the administration decided to use the U.N. resolutions as the basis for actions that would force Saddam's removal. Administration officials have argued that it will be impossible to prevent further discord in the Persian Gulf while Hussein remains in office. And this position has been echoed by many Democrats, including Vice President Al Gore.

The administration strategy might have lain fallow if Saddam had cooperated with the U.N., but he has defied U.N. inspectors at every turn. Moreover, what U.N. inspec-





Collage: Peter Hannan

tors have already discovered—a vast unsuspected network of facilities designed to produce nuclear weapons—has led them to believe that Saddam is still hiding both weapons and facilities. They fear that if they were to stop their work now, he could resurrect a nuclear threat before the decade is over.

Most recently, Hussein gave American, British and French forces ample provocation for military reprisal. On January 8, he barred U.N. inspectors from using U.N. aircraft to carry out their inspections, putting them at the mercy of Iraq's dangerous and unreliable aircraft, and also making it more difficult for them to stage surprise inspections. Tim Trevan, spokesman for the U.N. Special Commission, said that the Iraqi ban "would mean the end of our

operations." The same week, Iraqi armed forces violated U.N. resolutions by entering Kuwait to retrieve weapons, including Silkworm missiles, that the U.N. had slated for destruction.

But the Bush administration, eager to topple Hussein, always pressed the limits of the U.N.'s resolutions. After the economic sanctions failed to lead to a popular revolt, the administration rested its hopes on a military coup. Bush sought to force the military into action through humiliating strictures on their freedom of movement and escalating attacks on their personnel and weaponry. Administration strategists reasoned that military officers would overthrow Hussein in order to preserve their own power.

To put this strategy into effect, the Bush administration sought to use the U.N. inspection team as a means of provoking Saddam. Last July, when Hussein finally relented and allowed U.N. inspectors into Iraq's Agricultural Ministry, the administration asked the U.N. team to accelerate its inspections. The head of the U.N. team, suspecting ulterior motives, rejected the American request.

The Bush administration also used the tactic of setting up "no-fly zones" to provoke Hussein and humiliate his military. The original no-fly zone in the North was established in April 1991 to protect the Kurds from attack and to prevent massive migration into Turkey. But the "no-fly zones" that the administration established last August in the Shi'ite South served little military or humanitarian purpose. It was designed to incite Hussein and

upset his military. And it succeeded in doing so.

The allied no-fly zones were probably a prime factor in Hussein's decision to bar the U.N. inspection teams from using their own planes. He also reacted by setting up anti-aircraft batteries in the South and sending his planes against the American, French and British aircraft. The allies in turn used these actions to justify further air strikes against Hussein, including those that occurred during Clinton's first week in office.

Yet this strategy of seeking Hussein's overthrow through military escalation is not likely to work. If the devastating damage wrought by Desert Storm failed to dislodge Hussein, why should a series of relatively minor reprisals? Of

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course, the CIA could pull off a surprise, but why it should succeed in Baghdad where it failed so abysmally in Havana?

In addition, this strategy could have some very unpleasant consequences. It has already begun to tear apart the allied coalition, as Egypt and Russia have broken ranks with the U.S., Britain and France. And instead of restoring the balance of power in the Mideast, it is vastly strengthening Iran—a state that poses as great a long-run threat to stability as Iraq does.

The strategy of targeting Hussein poses particular dangers for the U.S. As Iraq continues its descent, only the outside presence of the U.S. is capable of balancing the force of Iran. The U.S. has already begun to establish a permanent military presence in the region—the bill for which may eventually exceed the cost of stationing American troops in Europe.

Moreover, beyond the sheer financial costs, the U.S. role as permanent

guarantor of the balance of power in the Gulf will create an endless distraction. It will prevent Clinton—just as it prevented Bush—from focusing on domestic problems. Like Bush, Clinton will become preoccupied with troop movements and radar installations and with the intemperate ravings of madmen and mullahs.

The purpose of American strategy in the Gulf should not be to deepen but to lessen the U.S. role. The U.S. cannot evade its responsibility, but it has to find ways to exercise it that are calculated to succeed and that take account of its own diminishing resources. Former President Bush's strategy in Iraq did not.

Clinton himself seemed to recognize the pitfall of Bush's strategy. In a January 13 interview with the *New York Times*, Clinton responded to a question about creating "normal relations" with Iraq this way: "Based on the evidence that we have, the people of Iraq would be better off if they had a different leader. But my job is not to pick their rulers for them. I always tell everybody, 'I'm a Baptist. I believe in deathbed conversions.' If he wants a different relationship with the United States and with the United Nations, all he has to do is change his behavior."

Clinton's response was a clear-cut endorsement of the U.N. strategy, but the next day, under intense pressure from fellow Democrats, Clinton reneged. At a news conference, he declared that "there is no difference between my policy and the policy of the present administration."

Once in office, Clinton sought to demonstrate that there was no difference. He described the military action that American forces took as "the American strategy," elevating Bush's mistaken tactics into a patriotic exercise. Maybe Clinton was providing cover for a coming change in foreign policy, but after his first week in office this seemed like wishful thinking. Instead, he appeared bent on repeating rather than repudiating the disastrous policy of his predecessor. ◀

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**POLITICS**

# Baird droppings

# H

He had one eye and one ear on the television, another ear on the phone, his finger on lists of fact-finders, sources, Capitol Hill staffers and reporters. For days, consumer watchdog Ralph Nader had been hounding the names on that ever-growing list. He was desperately tapping into his nationwide network of contacts to try to kill the nomination of attorney general-designate Zoë Baird.

Nader, who grew up in the blue-collar rural north-west Connecticut city of Winsted, has spent his adult life in Washington battling large military and insurance companies. Baird made a personal fortune as a hired gun for those very companies. Fresh from the White House and a top-shelf Washington law firm, she came to Connecticut in 1984 as top counsel for

General Electric (GE), then Aetna. Now, at 40, she had already waltzed to pinnacles of power beyond the reach of almost all the brightest people in her field. Despite Nader's most dogged efforts, she seemed to be waltzing into the Justice Department.

After the first day of the Senate Judiciary Committee's hearings into Baird's nomination, Nader's pessimism deepened. Democratic and Republican senators alike had allowed her to fudge her way out of damning questions.

"It's a lovefest," Nader muttered over and over. He had signed up to testify at the hearings about what he considered the dangers of naming a shill for insurance and military corporations as the country's top law enforcement official. So far, however, he was standing alone. Sometime-allies from environmental and civil rights groups had shunned his pleas to join the opposition. Democratic senators sympathetic to those groups told him they had "bigger fish to fry." They didn't want to risk angering the new Clinton administration over Zoë Baird. One liberal Congressman had sent a letter to the Senate committee asking to testify against Baird—

only to have his own staff intercept it and talk him out of alienating the new president.

"This is the final episode of the birth of a new fusion party between the Democrats and Republicans," Nader concluded. "Civil rights groups are no longer interested in the issue of corporate power. Organized labor is no longer a factor. The aura of inevitability that flows from the 'Democratic' Party increases year by year. People say, 'Why should we be the ones to stand up and challenge them?'"

Except when it comes to social services and legal services, Nader complained, the Baird episode was revealing the futility of trying to fight the influence of big money on Washington from the inside, through established liberal interest groups and politicians, no matter which party occupies the White House.

Yet within 24 hours, the momentum turned Nader's way. A tidal wave of outrage that had little to do with the issues he was raising had forced the senators to ask tougher questions. At week's end, an exhausted Baird surrendered in her quest to become the country's first female attorney general.

To what extent could Nader claim victory? The answers to that question offer clues about what to expect, and about how to press for fundamental change during the Clinton administration. They also reflect how the disintegration of decades-old political definitions of left and right will lead to unpredictable new coalitions.

Clearly, Nader and his allies cannot claim the most credit for Baird's defeat. She deserves much of the credit herself.

*It was a  
"lovefest"  
between  
Clinton and  
progressives,  
until the  
Baird episode  
spoiled  
the party.  
Now what?*

**By Paul Bass**  
NEW HAVEN, CONN.



By hiring an undocumented Peruvian couple for child care and chauffeur work, Baird knowingly broke laws she would have to uphold as attorney general. The *New York Times* found out. Faced with the revelations, she edited and re-edited her alibis.

After an initial lull, people across the U.S. reacted in outrage. As a woman pulling down more than \$500,000 a year (not counting another \$100,000-plus from her husband), Baird failed to convince people she had no choice but to hire illegal aliens. Instead, she encountered a wellspring of anger against the wealthy of all political stripes.

But that anger was not without an element of sexism. As one Democratic Senate Judiciary member's staffer put it, "Baird took the fall for Hillary Clinton. There was great resentment out there against, pardon my language, 'ambitious, ball-busting Yuppie bitches.' But people want to adulate Bill, and you can't adulate Bill and bash Hillary. We talked about the Nader stuff among the staff. People said, 'It's too bad. This is the stuff that should be getting her in trouble. But it's a sideshow.'"

Nader alone would not have stopped Baird's nomination with his arguments about corporate influence and potential conflicts of interest. By all accounts, the tens of thousands of spontaneous citizen phone calls and telegrams pouring into

Washington made the difference. But he argues that those calls did result largely from the way that the probing of Baird—by both Nader-spurred activists and the activist-spurred press—kept the story alive and raised fundamental class issues.

Nader's network also served as a spur and a conduit for mounting press exposés about the Baird family's dealings with the Peruvian couple. He forcefully argued that the hiring raised serious questions about Baird's respect for the law. But he also saw the incident as an opening to build a larger case against her.

In the end, Judiciary Committee members faced a plethora of reasons to vote against Baird, including the following:

- On GE's behalf, she lobbied Congress to water down a new law protecting whistle-blowers who expose corruption and fraud—at companies like GE.

- She drew up an alleged "self-policing" plan for military contractors in an attempt to ward off government oversight.

- Baird's neighborhood, New Haven's tony, lily-white St. Ronan Street area, is the target of a landmark lawsuit by the Justice Department. The department charged that the neighborhood's prominent citizens—a judge, leading local businesspeople, political and academic figures—used their influence to try to stop a foster family of black and Latino children with disabilities from moving into the neighborhood. Baird alleged she knew nothing about the suit until reading about it in the papers.

Subsequent revelations cast serious doubt on that claim. And even if she was telling the truth, civil rights advocates questioned her commitment to fighting discrimination if she didn't speak out against it in her own backyard.

- A "loser pays" rule Baird backed would intimidate individuals from suing wealthy corporations in the first place.

- On Aetna's behalf, she joined Dan Quayle's crusade for "reforming" the court system by limiting how much corporations (and insurers) had to pay individuals who successfully sue them. The limited-liability quest especially frightens environmental groups, which see liability as the key to putting teeth into enforcement of Superfund.

Unlike, say, Bill Clinton, Baird's political debts didn't come just partly from the world of big corporate money—they came entirely from that world. And that's how Clinton came to know her. When Clinton campaigned in New Haven last fall, Baird organized a meeting at the exclusive Quinnipiac Club between the candidate and a group of Fortune 500 CEOs. Mere politicians weren't allowed in the door.

"To put her in a position where she has to deal with people she has worked with and socialized with" endangers tough governmental action on issues like Superfund, argued Lois Gibbs, who heads the Virginia-based Citizens' Clear-

inghouse for Hazardous Waste. "You don't want to bring in someone from a waste-disposal company to run the EPA."

So Gibbs was glad to help when Ralph Nader called her the weekend before Baird's hearing, asking her to sign on to a letter asking the Judiciary Committee to delay the hearings pending "further examination" of the immigration cases and "other instances of bad judgment." Leaders of several other progressive groups, including Physicians for a National Health Plan and the National Insurance Consumer Organization, also signed on.

But most of the interest-group heavy hitters Nader called—such as the National Organization for Women, the American Civil Liberties Union, the Audubon Society and the Sierra Club, all of which were active in opposing Robert Bork's nomination to the Supreme Court—said no. "Everybody's posturing themselves hoping they'll get appointed or get some money," Gibbs complained.

Meanwhile, Nader was the only significant critic quoted in newspapers. This prompted one New Haven lawyer who knew about Baird's neighborhood to call Nader and congratulate him for taking a stand. Nader encouraged him to call other New Haveners for more details on the lawsuit.

At Nader's urging, the lawyer spent every spare minute for the next five days telling reporters around the country about Baird and her husband's role in the lawsuit, faxing their articles to other reporters, tracking down documents. Rather than the established Washington-area liberal lobbies, individuals like this ended up helping Nader gather a strong case against Baird.

The fact-hunters nailed down the fact that Baird was more involved in the neighborhood organization than she'd let on and that she may have known more about the suit than she indicated. Meanwhile, a second statement was issued calling for delaying the hearings, this one from the respected non-partisan Center for Responsive Politics. Though not opposing Baird, the organization called for a delay based on the new information about the neighborhood controversy.

Still, Nader's allies couldn't convince papers like the *Washington Post* or the *Los Angeles Times* to investigate the neighborhood story. The Senate staffs interested in the new information tended to be those of second-tier Republicans. It was apparently through one of the Republican staffs that the right-wing *Washington Times* obtained the information for a story it ran the first day of the hearings, revealing new details about Baird and the neighborhood group. Nader allies included the story in information packets to senators. But on that first day, no one pressed Baird when she continued fudging about the incident in her responses.

That all changed when the hearings resumed Thursday. Buoyed by the persistence of the immigration story in prominent news accounts and on radio talk shows, constituents began calling senators' offices to register universal disgust. Various newspapers picked up on the new neighborhood information as well as new facts about Baird's

past. And by this time, former U.S. Representative Barbara Jordan, a respected Texas Democrat, had called for Baird's withdrawal. A bevy of legislators from both parties followed her example. Democrats waited for Clinton to send them a signal. Reporters from all major papers set out on the trail led out by Nader's allies. Opinion polls showed Baird was about as popular as Saddam Hussein.

Nader concludes from the Baird battle that, except for controversies involving social services groups or legal aid, citizen activists groups will have to bypass the traditional civil rights and other left-center lobbies to influence the Clinton administration. He suggests continuing the outside pressure tactics used in the Reagan-Bush years—from lawsuits and public protests to hounding journalists to break stories.

Lois Gibbs offers a somewhat different option: find more Ralph Naders. She points out that a group like hers can't mobilize its 25,000 supporters to act swiftly on breaking controversies such as the Baird nomination because it would take two months just to mail advisories to all of them. But Nader, she observes, has amassed the kind of informal yet sprawling and experienced volunteer network needed to run an instant, sophisticated campaign. "We need more people in Washington like Nader who are not looking for positions, who are not looking for money ... who are not afraid of burning bridges."

Clinton has promised to appoint a multicultural staff, one that "looks like America." But what happens when an appointee breaks the rich-white-male mold, but otherwise still fits a disproportionately upper-class or "Washington insider" profile? Complicating the process for activists is the euphoria that comes with having access to at least some White House people after 12 years in the political wilderness.

In this case, simply because of Baird's gender, supporters like newly elected Washington Sen. Patty Murray were able to present Baird as one of the "new faces" Clinton had hoped to bring to Washington as part of overall change. "[Baird] is a woman," Nader says, "so the women's groups were silent. The Republicans loved her because she's so pro-corporate."

Yet some of the lobbies absent from Nader's coalition take exception to the criticism. NOW President Patricia Ireland points out that her organization didn't endorse any presidential candidate last year. "So we're not currying favor with anybody," she argues. "Contrary to what most folks assume, we are probably harder on individual women because we have higher expectations. We want them to be exemplary."

The Democratic Judiciary staffer echoes Ireland's position. While women's groups didn't join Nader's opposition, he says, they played a crucial role by failing to rush to rescue Baird. "This is the first female nominee for attorney general. But women's groups let her twist in the wind, even after the White House asked them to fight for her. Nader looks at the glass as half empty. I see it as half full."

Paul Bass is a reporter for the *New Haven Advocate*.



## R E P U B L I C A N S

# A house divided

*The Christian right is on the warpath and GOP moderates are the targets.*

By Frederick Clarkson

**T**he resurgent Christian right, which stunned the nation by declaring "religious war" at last year's Republican National Convention, wants to control the Republican National Committee by 1996. Led by Pat Robertson's Christian Coalition, the Christian right so far controls a dozen state GOP committees, including Texas, Louisiana, Virginia, Kansas, Washington and Iowa.

Moderate Republicans now find themselves on the front lines of a battle they did not seek. Some have left the party. Others are bracing for a fight. Some are unflinchingly seeking party unity. Others are in denial about the seriousness of the Christian right's capacity to seize power and the dangers of theocratic extremism. The party of Lincoln is increasingly a house divided.

Two trends define the new Christian right. One is theological, the other politi-

cal strategy.

Theology first. Ever since the public humiliations of Jim and Tammy Bakker and Jimmy Swaggart, it's been hard for many Americans to take the Christian right seriously. However, Swaggart and the Bakkers were among the least political of the televangelists. They catered to a largely Pentecostal audience that avoided politics, believing that "the things of this world" are of Satan and that little can be done until Jesus returns.

Robertson and a wide group of evangelicals, however, have evolved beyond this view. Through a series of theological compromises they now call for a "political mission of the church," believing they are divinely appointed to build the Kingdom of God in the here and now, called to do battle with Satan instead of waiting for Jesus. The tricky part, of course, is deciding what is Satanic and what to do about it. Many look to Pat Robertson for answers.

In his view, "the Church" is in a biblically prophesied struggle with Satan. This struggle is occurring at the end of what he refers to as God's "end times." Robertson's notion of a God-ordained "inevitable victory" imbues the grunt work of precinct politics with transcendent meaning—Christians are building the Kingdom of God, not merely electing a GOP county chairman. He has roused to varying degrees hundreds of thousands of previously apolitical Christians to do battle.

Many issues concern the movement, but one is central: Christianity. In late 1991, Robertson related how his Christian Coalition got its name. He said its leaders didn't choose a name according to the current inclusive fashions emphasizing "traditional values" or "pro-family agenda." "I said 'No!'" he shouted. "I am not ashamed of Jesus! And we will call this the Christian Coalition. And if other people don't like it, that's just tough luck."

Of course, the coalition's name implies that its political agenda is synonymous with Christianity itself, and that anyone who opposes it is therefore anti-Christian, even Satanic. Apparently Robertson really meant what he wrote last summer about the Iowa Equal Rights Amendment: "The feminist agenda is not about equal rights. ... It's about a socialist, anti-family political movement that encourages women to leave their husbands, kill their children, practice witchcraft, destroy capitalism and become lesbians." In his recent book, *The New World Order*, Robertson argues that even what he calls well-intentioned men like former presidents Jimmy Carter (a devout Baptist) and George Bush (Episcopalian) are unwitting agents of Satan.

Since one does not reason with Satan or his dupes, intelligent discourse on public policy becomes almost impossible. For example, when Christian right activists have been elected to school boards, discussion often gridlocks over alleged



press and party leaders to begin to deal with it openly. American society has sought to de-emphasize religious differences in politics, knowing how the invocation of competing deities has driven warfare for millennia. It is the obvious mission of the Christian Coalition to rip that social consensus asunder.

Founded in 1989, the Coalition has grown quickly—to close to 450 chapters—and is now the most important Christian right organization. Its strategy grows out of bitter experiences in the '80s, when the Christian right worked hard for the elections of Ronald Reagan and George Bush. Coalition leaders believe they got little but lip service for their efforts. For example, 12 years of Supreme Court appointments notwithstanding, the constitutional right to an abortion still stands, albeit somewhat circumscribed.

At the Christian Coalition's first national strategy conference in November 1991, the usually avuncular Robertson offered up a messianic vision that was met with cheers and a

"witchcraft" in school books.

Thus the literal demonization of opponents and issues is integral to the identity and tactics of the Christian right. This is subtly epitomized by the Coalition's "voter guides," 40 million of which were distributed in the presidential race alone. The simple, half-page flier compared the records of Clinton and Bush using gross over-simplifications designed to slant the guide to the president—obviously the correct Christian choice. The guide claimed that Clinton supported "abortion on demand," "homosexual rights" and "condom distribution in the schools."

Randall Terry, titular head of Operation Rescue, was not nearly as subtle as the Coalition voter guide. Terry wrote a letter to 37,000 churches in October arguing that "to vote for Bill Clinton is to sin against God." The Rev. James Dunn of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs told the *Washington Post* recently, "There is a terribly troubling tendency toward theocracy in all this."

Theocracy is by definition opposed to a pluralist society in which respect for religious differences is a fundamental value and the cornerstone of religious freedom. Clearly, Christian conservatives have the constitutional right to try to influence and make public policy. But American traditions of religious tolerance are being exploited by demagogic theocrats. Reporters and political opponents have generally been afraid to raise "the religion issue." It took the spectacle of the Republican convention to compel the mainstream

standing ovation from the 800 or so delegates. He claimed that the "United Nations is going to rule the world. ... We're going to cede the sovereignty of America to this organization. One world currency. One world army. One world court system, very possibly. And it can happen overnight."

"The elites," he concluded, "have turned against themselves and have tried to destroy the very society from which they drew their nurture. The academic elites, the money elites and the government elites turned on their own society. And into that void," he dramatically declared, "steps an organization called the Christian Coalition."

The new strategy of the Christian right emphasizes grassroots development over presidential candidates and is based on two main observations about American politics. The first is that to have power, you have to influence or control one of the major parties. The other is that since most people don't vote, it is possible to organize a disciplined voting bloc and exert disproportionate amounts of political power. "We don't have to worry about convincing a majority of Americans to agree with us," explains Guy Rogers, the Coalition's national field director. "Most of them are staying home and watching *Falcon Crest*."

Even in high turnout presidential election years, argues Rogers, a relatively small percentage of eligible voters decides who wins or loses. Of all eligible voters, only about 60 percent are registered, and only about half of those actually cast ballots. "So," he says, "only 30 percent of the eligi-

ble voters vote. Therefore, only 15 percent of the eligible voters determine the outcome."

"In low turnout elections," he concludes, "city council, state legislature, county commissions—the percentage of the eligible voters who determine who wins can be as low as 6 or 7 percent." And when that is further broken down into party primaries, the numbers can get tiny.

So by persuading conservative Christians of the "political mission of the church" and organizing churches into a voting bloc, it has been possible to sway, even sweep, local races and sleepy GOP primaries. In Virginia Beach, Va., in 1991, Coalition-backed candidates for the state legislature won seven of nine races. These Republican freshmen provided the leadership and the extra votes needed to pass an abortion bill requiring parental notification. (The bill was vetoed by Gov. Douglas Wilder.) Then in 1992, the Christian right took over the Virginia GOP state committee in the party primaries.

Currently, the Coalition is developing local and national computerized voter ID programs, often by matching church membership lists with Republican voter registration lists to find politically reliable voters to turn out for their candidates.

"We want to build the largest voter file in America," declares Guy Rogers. His files identify anti-abortion and anti-gay voters, and feature other personal and political data so that, according to Rogers, "we not only know who they are but what precinct they vote in." The Coalition's growing capacity for efficient local and national voter mobilization means they can take full advantage of the increasing fragmentation of the electorate and ongoing voter apathy.

The Coalition's voter guides have been successfully used in many local and federal races. A dramatic example was how the Coalition assisted the come-from-behind re-election victory of Sen. Jesse Helms (R-NC) in 1990 by distributing 750,000 voter guides through churches on the Sunday before the Tuesday vote. "The press had no idea what we were doing," says organizer Judy Haynes, "and they still don't know what we did." The Coalition also claims that millions of voter guides helped propel Republicans Alfonse D'Amato of New York and Lauch Faircloth of North Carolina to Senate victories last November.

Meanwhile, Robertson's party putsch attempt is overt, but the tactics often are not. The Coalition's Pennsylvania manual states, for example, that "you should never mention the name Christian Coalition in Republican circles." One should "become directly involved in the local Republican Central Committee so that you are an insider." "This way," the manual confides, "you can get a copy of the local committee rules and a feel for who is on the current Republican Committee." From there, one should scout opportunities to fill vacant party posts with conservatives or to run against those who "put the Republican Party ahead of principles."

The battle is being waged more publicly in Harris County, Texas, where the party has split. Harris County is home to Houston, where George Bush maintained his legal resi-

dence (in a posh hotel that went bankrupt). While Bush orchestrated the selection of Houston to host last year's GOP convention, the Christian right took over the Harris County party. Yet Bush's deepening alliance with the Christian right alienated many more traditional Republicans like those in Harris County, who themselves were targeted by the Christian right. The result of Bush's tilt to the theocrats was the prime-time convention spectacle featuring Pat Buchanan and Pat Robertson, which played a key role in Bush's defeat in November.

At the Harris County GOP meeting in December, the Christian right shouted down and ousted moderate chair Betsy Lake and installed Christian right leader Steven Hotze. Lake and other moderates, meanwhile, incorporated a competing GOP group.

Similar eruptions are likely at GOP meetings at all levels around the country this year. The Christian Coalition strategy conference in September featured a workshop on the mechanics of taking over GOP meetings—how to pack the meeting with Coalition members, develop a convention game plan and make sharp use of *Robert's Rules of Order*. The workshop presenter, Morton Blackwell, a member of the Republican National Committee, told of his showdown with GOP pro-choice activist Ann Stone at the Virginia Eighth District and state GOP conventions in 1992.

He "cleaned her clock," he bragged, because Stone had neither the people nor the organization to win.

One alarming aspect of Hotze's coup in Texas is his involvement with the National Coordinating Council (NCC) of the overtly theocratic Coalition on Revival (COR). COR/NCC proposes to "Christianize" America by taking over the government, beginning with county councils and county sheriff offices. Once in power, they want to establish county militias. COR/NCC chief Jay Grimstead says militias are needed to fight a future "Communist Mexico" that "will march across the Rio Grande." The federal government, he says, can't be trusted to do the job. COR/NCC also seeks, among other things, to abolish the public schools, the IRS and the Federal Reserve by the year 2000.

Hotze is also a member of the Texas GOP Executive Committee. And one of his COR/NCC colleagues, the Rev. Billy Felling, is a member of the California Republican Committee.

If the far right is successful in capturing powerful institutions—the GOP political apparatus, school boards, local and county governments—the results would be profoundly disruptive at best. The power of the government would be invoked to implement far-right theocratic programs. Felling has written that civil government is "ordained of God" to be the "police department within the Kingdom of God."

And the Kingdom of God, many believe, is at hand. ◀

**Frederick Clarkson** is co-author of *Challenging the Christian Right: The Activists' Handbook*, which is available from the Institute for First Amendment Studies, Box 589, Great Barrington, Mass., 01230.



# COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

## Making the fat cats chip in

**L**ike a cancer patient who protested nuclear bombs prior to diagnosis yet comes to understand that a little carefully aimed radiation can be a lifesaver, some people in Louisiana have begun to realize all taxes aren't bad.

**Corporate tax exemptions in Louisiana cheated local governments and schools out of \$2.5 billion in the '80s. But one grass-roots group is fighting back.**

**By Robin Epstein**  
BATON ROUGE, LA.

Members of the Louisiana Coalition for Tax Justice (LCTJ) have even launched a campaign for increased taxation. But they don't want people like themselves—poor and middle-class blacks and whites from all walks of life—to pay more. Instead, they want Louisiana's industries, which include some of the world's most profitable corporations and some of the state's major polluters, to pay their fair share.

As it now stands, industry gets a free ride on most local property taxes. Because of an industrial tax

break added to the state's constitution in 1936 and taken advantage of with a vengeance since it was amended in 1974, companies can be exempted from paying taxes on new buildings, machinery and equipment for up to 10 years.

LCTJ's recently published book, *The Great Louisiana Tax Giveaway*, shows that between 1980 and 1989, corporate tax exemptions cheated local governments out of \$2.5 billion that could have been spent on roads, bridges, sewers, police and other public services. The loss in school taxes alone was \$941 million during that decade. The book also shows that the main rationale for the industrial tax exemption—that it creates a lot of good jobs for Louisiana residents—is groundless. For example, one refinery received \$6.7 million in tax relief in 1989 for a project that created four new permanent jobs. That's \$1.6 million per job.

Parishes (Louisiana's equivalent to counties) and schools, which are desperate for funds, have no veto power over corporate tax breaks that cost them dearly. Louisiana gets high marks in all the wrong categories: unemployment, illiteracy, toxic emissions, teen pregnancy and the lack of health coverage. The regressive sales tax places a disproportionate tax burden on the state's poor.

LCTJ aims to repeal the industrial property tax exemption with a constitutional amendment. But getting an amendment on the ballot requires the two-thirds vote of both houses of the legislature, and ratification requires a majority of the popular vote.

Since industry has a firm grip on many of the state's politicians, and LCTJ has no hopes of outspending the likes of Ciba-Geigy and Dow, the group hopes to shift public opinion against the industrial tax exemption and marshal enough votes to threaten state legislators' re-election.

To create such a popular groundswell, LCTJ has set out to explain to Louisiana residents that their community's impoverishment is a direct result of the tax breaks. It points out that plants locate in Louisiana for cheap energy, raw materials and access to the Mississippi River, helping people poke holes in industry's claim that abolishing the tax breaks will hinder economic development. And LCTJ is trying to show people how to hold their elected officials accountable.

If successful, LCTJ will not only rectify unfair taxation and channel money to much-needed projects. It will also render Louisiana—with its history of power being concentrated in the hands of charismatic individuals such as Huey Long—more democratic. Repealing the industrial tax break will also prove that it is possible to build a grass-roots movement based on people's shared economic interests.

LCTJ grew out of Louisiana's labor and environmental

movements. In the late '80s, during a five-and-a-half-year fight against a BASF lockout in Geismar, La., the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers (OCAW) Local 4-620 discovered the German chemical giant was getting a tax break on a closed plant. That prompted OCAW to wonder how much revenue the state lost to the tax exemption overall. Environmentalists were also outraged that companies received tax breaks regardless of their environmental violations.

In 1989, around the time of the first Great Louisiana Toxics March, in which hundreds walked the Baton Rouge-New Orleans corridor known as "Cancer Alley," OCAW received a grant to compile data on the industrial tax exemption and hired former New Orleans *Times-Picayune* reporter Zack Nauth to do the research.

While engaged in that investigation, Nauth realized that diverse organizations which had not previously found common ground were all keenly interested in his findings. Building trades unions were angry that companies getting tax breaks used out-of-state or non-union workers; environmentalists believed their battles to get companies fined for illegal emissions were undermined by tax breaks greatly exceeding those fines; African-American and low-income citizens groups saw they would receive more public services if local government coffers weren't empty; teachers realized layoffs could be avoided if schools could tax industry.

The Louisiana Coalition for Tax Justice was formed in 1990, with Nauth as staff coordinator, in order to include all these groups and work on changing state tax policy.

In its early years, LCTJ focused on the Board of Commerce and Industry, the body which decides whether to grant corporate tax breaks but in practice remains a rubber stamp. LCTJ forced the board to penalize some companies for falling short of the requirement that at least 80 percent of their workers be Louisiana residents. On one occasion 55 citizens from 12 parishes and 36 groups attended a meeting armed with brooms and called for a "clean sweep." After raising questions about some board members' conflicts of interest, LCTJ members demanded several of their resignations. The board adjourned the meeting.

With the support of then Gov. Buddy Roemer, who was pro-business but was also willing to tie economic development to environmental safety, LCTJ helped push through rules that slightly reduced tax breaks for corporations with bad environmental records. The rules espoused by LCTJ won national attention for being innovative, but were watered down by the board before adoption. What's more, the board didn't even obey its own rules. The current governor, Edwin Edwards, abolished the rule soon after taking office last year.

LCTJ began to target the state legislature in 1991. Under pressure, a senate committee unanimously endorsed eliminating corporate tax breaks on school taxes, but the measure was defeated on the senate floor.

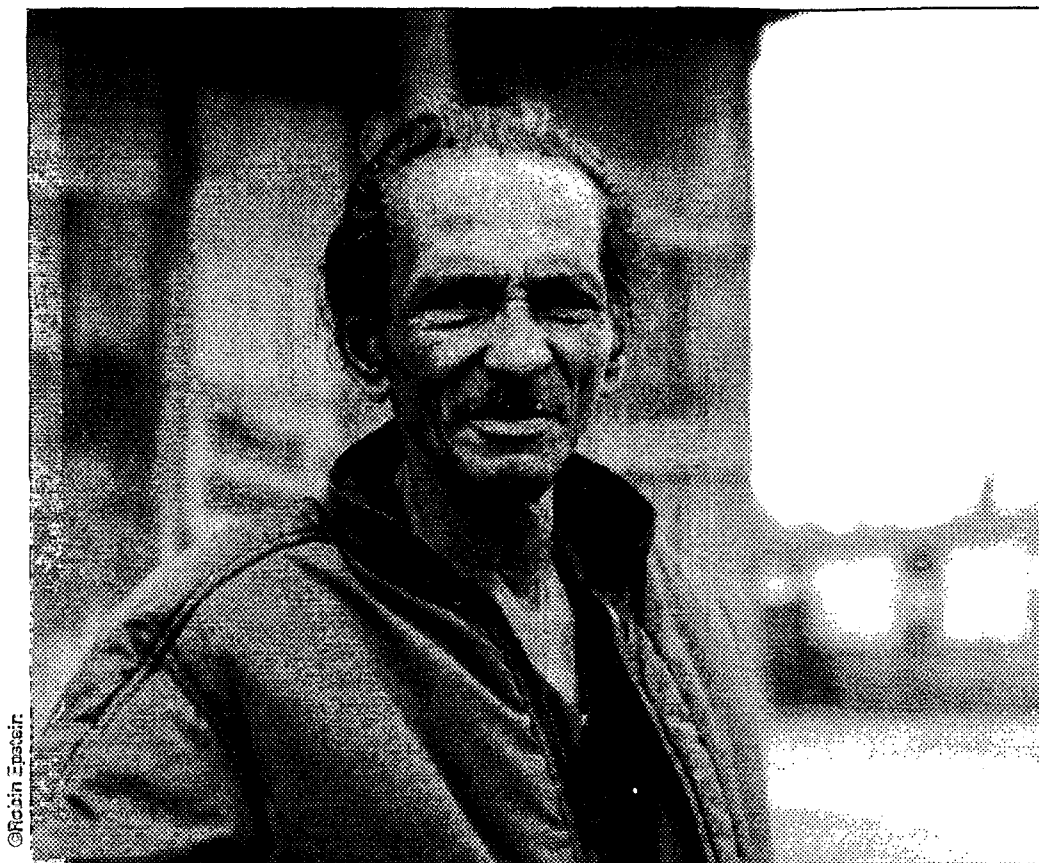
In 1992, LCTJ publicized its book and drew crowds and media attention on its caravan through 20 cities leading up to last summer's specially called constitutional convention on tax reform. The group convinced several parish governments and school boards to pass resolutions favoring elimination or reform of the industrial tax exemption.

During the constitutional convention, the group's proposed amendments to abolish corporate tax breaks, lower sales taxes and increase taxes on the wealthiest got a hearing, but garnered insufficient support to pass. Proposals offered by legislators, the governor and industry also failed. LCTJ is now gearing up for the March legislative session at which the tax structure will be addressed once again.

LCTJ has always been more than a tax coalition. It also organizes its own chapters. These three low-income neighborhood groups in and around Baton Rouge, two of which are predominantly black, work on local issues. In St. Gabriel, members want to get a community health clinic started; in Garden City, members want Exxon, whose huge refinery is adjacent to their neighborhood, to



From The Great Louisiana Tax Giveaway



©Robin Epstein

LCTJ's coalition partners. Chapters don't come to LCTJ. The group creates them, attracting members by working on issues that affect them directly.

LCTJ's hybrid structure causes some tension. Its two efforts are animated by very different goals. There's always the danger that the neighborhood chapters and the statewide coalition could be parallel tracks that appear to meet on the horizon, but never actually do.

Like other single-issue groups, the coalition exists to achieve a specific policy change—fair taxation. The coalition tries to mobilize as many people as possible to lobby their legislators.

Like other grass-roots groups for whom the organizing process is more important than short-term policy gains, the chapters

**Wilfred Greene, LCTJ board member and retired school principal, helped prevent Formosa Plastics from becoming his neighbor on the Mississippi and now works to bring environmentally safe jobs to his community.**

was sold on chapters after the Partnership for Democracy, a now-defunct foundation, sent him to Kentucky to spend a week learning about Kentuckians for the Commonwealth, a chapter-based group. (See *In These Times*, Oct. 14.)

While LCTJ modeled its chapters after KFTC's, it did not duplicate the relationship between the chapters and the organization as a whole. Most KFTC chapters are citizens groups founded to deal with a crisis, such as a landfill or an incinerator. When these groups contact KFTC and ask to become chapters, they are informed of the quid pro quo that requires them to work on KFTC's statewide agenda in exchange for assistance on their local projects.

LCTJ, by contrast, encourages its chapters to work on the tax issue, but does not require them to do so, in part because it doesn't have the leverage to elicit such promises. Groups springing up around environmental crises affiliate with the Louisiana Environmental Action Network, one of

buy out property owners en masse.

The story behind LCTJ's dual strategy of coordinating efforts by existing groups to change state tax policy on one hand, and organizing chapters to work on local issues on the other, sheds light on funders' influence on non-profits. Nauth

exist to help disenfranchised people participate in decisions that affect their lives and to build a power base of citizens instilled with democratic values. To develop leaders, chapters train people to run meetings, recruit new members, raise money and select chapter priorities.

Both goals are worthwhile and could complement one another. But they could be diluted as one young organization tries to accomplish them simultaneously.

At a recent retreat, LCTJ's board, which includes chapter and coalition partner representatives, decided to shift some staff time from legislative activities to the chapters. LCTJ plans to ask its coalition partners to take more responsibility for lobbying so organizers don't have to stop working on local issues during legislative sessions.

Strong chapters will guarantee that the group doesn't disappear after corporate tax breaks are resolved, says LCTJ President Chris Gaudet. "This is just one unfair governmental institution we want to do away with," he says, "but there are other things in society that are hurting people without money and without power."

LCTJ's acceptance of some chapters' reluctance to lead the fight that sparked the group's formation is a sobering lesson in the difficulty of building a grass-roots base around economic issues that people cannot easily see and feel. But if LCTJ strikes a good balance between its chapters and its coalition and encourages cross-fertilization between the two, it may change Louisiana dramatically and develop an organizing model for others to emulate. ◀



# G O V E R N M E N T

## The \$12 billion civics lesson

***If Bill Clinton persists in seeing national service as a way to teach citizenship, his program is bound to fail.***

**By Eric B. Gorham**

**B**ill Clinton used no less of a forum than his inaugural speech to push the idea of a national service plan for the nation's youth. "I challenge a new generation of young Americans to a season of service; to act on your idealism by helping troubled children, keeping company with those in need, reconnecting our torn communities," the president said.

And who could argue with such fine words? The concept of national service appeals to just about everyone inside the Beltway, and Clinton may have little trouble convincing the rest of the country of its merit. After all, the idea seems so patriotic: armies of young adults fighting wars on poverty, illiteracy, AIDS, drug abuse, homelessness, child neglect and environmental decay by enlisting in a one- or two-year program that would guarantee them money for college.

"There is so much [service work] to be done,"

Clinton said in his inaugural address. Yet, by all indications, the president envisions national service as much more than a means for accomplishing some much-needed societal tasks. Perhaps more importantly, he sees it as a way of teaching young people citizenship and instilling in them community values. This, too, might seem like a good idea. But most policy-makers—including some of those on the Clinton team—have not thought through the implications of what it means to teach citizenship through national service. And if Clinton persists in seeing national service as a massive civics lesson, the program is bound to fail.

Up to this point, Clinton has been vague about a program he claims could cost up to \$12 billion per year. In speeches, he calls for a National Service Trust Fund that would pay college students minimum wage and forgive up to \$10,000 worth of college loans for each year the student served (to a maximum of \$20,000). The trust fund would be administered by the Commission on National and Community Service. Signed into law by President George Bush on November 16, 1990, the commission grants money to organizations in the 50 states to promote and evaluate community service programs. This past summer, for instance, the commission gave \$20 million to organizations offering college grants in return for service work. The Progressive Policy Institute (PPI)—a Washington think tank with close ties to Clinton—suggests that funding for these programs increase by an additional \$2 billion over the next year.

A recent PPI publication, *Mandate for Change*, offers the best glimpse at what a Clinton national service plan would entail. The PPI promotes national service as part of a "new compact for opportunity and citizenship."



With charter schools and youth apprenticeship programs, the PPI believes that national service could help fundamentally reform U.S. educational policy. Moreover, it claims that national service would also help transform social welfare policy by providing minimum-wage community service jobs to welfare recipients.

In an interview with the *Boston Globe* this past November, Al From, a Clinton associate who heads the Democratic Leadership Council, called national service "the formula" for wedding mainstream values to progressive programs and ideas in order to make them politically palatable. Thus Clinton's advisers see the program as not merely one policy among many but as a foundation for radical, "progressive" change in public policy.

The centerpiece of the PPI's national service plan consists of an 800,000-member "citizens corps" (200,000 within the first year) whose members would work one or two years, full time, in exchange for "low wages" and vouchers for college, job training and housing. The "target" recruits would be middle-class high school graduates who need financial help for college or job training.

Clinton and company would have the program give these young people what PPI calls a "civic experience," a lesson in citizenship. This aspect of the program is perplexing. In the first place, why do young people need to become better citizens? Proponents of a good-citizenship service program claim that today's young people are selfish, nihilistic, anti-

social. Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-MA) argues that the "most important result [of national service] may be its effect on young citizens. ... Many of the crises we face today are the bitter fruit of the 'me' attitude generated during the '80s. Perhaps the '90s can become a 'we' decade, in which helping others becomes a national priority."

Indeed, Clinton proclaimed in his inaugural speech that "[i]n serving, we recognize a simple and powerful truth: We need each other and we must care for one another." But Clinton's "truth"—that service teaches selflessness—is neither as simple nor as powerful as the president would have us believe.

If, for instance, young people engage in national service in order to acquire federal benefits, one cannot say that they did so out of community spirit or "civic enterprise." And how exactly do conservation, hospital, day care and other types of service work make a person a better citizen? Most, if not all, of these tasks will be routine and they may serve to alienate as many unmotivated young people as they fulfill motivated ones. As social psychologists Ellen Greenberger and Laurence Steinberg point out in their book, *When Teenagers Work: The Psychological and Social Costs of Adolescent Employment*, routine tasks contribute to academic deficiencies and greater cynicism toward work in general among young workers.

Clinton has also tied the program into a vague sense of community. "If we have no sense of community, the Ameri-





can dream will continue to wither. We're all in this together, and we will rise or fall together," he said shortly after his election. But which communities are we supposed to be citizens of? The nation? How does one define America in a common way so that all will know that they are citizens of the same "thing"? The community? Skinheads constitute communities, the board of directors of General Motors is a community, Brooklyn is a community (or, now, many communities). How do we serve one community without simultaneously doing a disservice to other communities?

It seems to me that the greatest disservice we can do to "the American community," however defined, is to perpetuate the idea that community service, by itself, inculcates citizenship. Citizenship is not about service, it is about learning—learning about government, learning how to think critically, learning how to discuss issues and ideas with others.

We can create civic programs—programs that involve citizens in political issues, study groups that raise their reading levels and teach them to question government policies, advocacy organizations that generate interest in government. But these are programs that don't fulfill "national needs." In fact, every minute spent in conversation with others about government policy is a minute lost cleaning blackboards by oneself in an empty classroom.

If the goal is to teach citizenship, a national service program ought to place advocacy groups on the same pedestal, if not higher, than service organizations. For instance, the National Service Trust Fund could make money available for conservation by funding work camps or by sponsoring organizations that hire teens to pick up trash in the inner cities. But why not instead provide service funds to public interest groups like Louisiana's Alliance for Affordable Energy? Young people who work with these agencies would then not only engage in conservation work but also learn about the issues surrounding utility rate increases, least-cost

energy plans and other political concerns of the community.

The advocacy groups that fall under the program could represent a wide range of political ideologies. After all, young people could have a "civic experience" in either Operation Rescue or the National Abortion Rights Action League.

National servers could also participate in local government. But instead of merely being election monitors, schoolteacher aides or police assistants, they might be placed in programs that give them some distance from, and perspective on, their governments. So a police assistant might also work for the policeman's union or the local legal-aid office in order to receive political lessons in the economics of the adult and juvenile justice system.

National service as a compact for "opportunity and citizenship" ought to be both. If national service is only to be a jobs program or a student-loan program, then the National Service Trust Fund could support any kind of job it deems productive or at which a young person could learn vocational skills. If, however, Clinton is serious about making the program into a training ground for good citizenship, national service ought to teach young people politics. Without the political work, program participants become servants not citizens—and this is not, I assume, the lesson Clinton wants America to teach its young people. To be a citizen is to be informed, to possess dignity and to be accorded respect by one's peers.

Dignity, however, costs money—a good deal more money than service tasks. This is the practical problem inherent in national-service rhetoric: Talking about citizenship is very cheap, but inculcating it successfully may be the last thing a president wants to do on a limited budget.

**Eric B. Gorham**, an assistant professor of political science at Loyola University in New Orleans, is author of *National Service, Citizenship, and Political Education* (SUNY Press, 1992).

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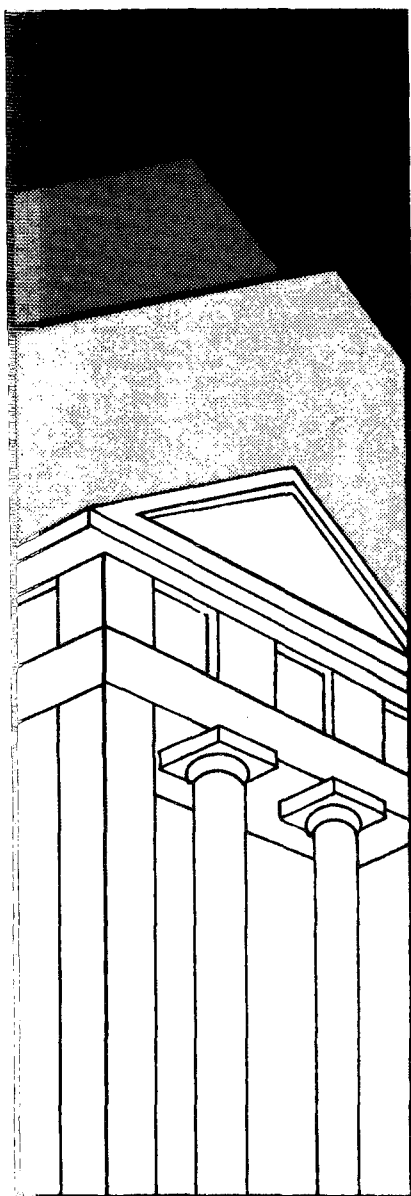
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## EMPLOYMENT

# Puerto Rican holiday

**A**

Acme Boot's new Puerto Rican factory started hiring about 200 workers in January, just as it was laying off the same number of workers at its main plant in Clarksville, Tenn. The Tennessee workers' pain was compounded as they discovered that the U.S. government is heavily subsidizing the runaway plant with tax breaks and job training funds.

"It's wrong that they take our tax dollars and then take our jobs elsewhere," says Mitch Tucker, the local union president at Clarksville's largest employer and sole remaining union shop. Recalling President Clinton's oft-repeated campaign pledge to stop taxpayer financing of job exports, Tucker calls the anticipated Acme transfer of 500 jobs to Puerto Rico

by next June "the Clinton administration's first test on jobs."

By ending some of the most glaring job export subsidies, Clinton could slow the hemorrhage of manufacturing jobs and also raise as much as \$10 billion a year in taxes, argues Robert McIntyre, director of Citizens for Tax Justice.

Started in the '20s, Acme Boot had long been a stable family firm that reinvested in new technology. In 1985 William Farley, a corporate takeover specialist allied with junk bond king Michael Milken, bought Northwest Industries, then the owner of Acme Boot.

After the heavily leveraged buyout, Farley used both Acme's \$10 million cash reserves and a mortgage on its plant to help pay for the takeover. Farley promised Acme employees that there would always be manufacturing jobs in Clarksville, and as a Democratic presidential aspirant and big-bucks contributor, he had denounced American management's "uncaring attitude." But after the takeover Farley closed two Tennessee plants employing 440 people, laid off 300 Clarksville workers, wrested concessions from the union, stopped reinvesting in the plant and opened factories

in El Paso and in Mexico.

Farley continued his takeover spree, but his bid for textile giant West Point Pepperell unravelled as Drexel Burnham Lambert collapsed. That debacle pushed his Farley Industries into bankruptcy proceedings from which it just emerged last December.

Last spring, Acme managers told Clarksville workers that they were thinking of closing the plant and getting out of manufacturing. The union offered concessions, but management said money wasn't the issue since 1992 was the second most profitable year in the company's history. In December, after the union discovered the company planned to open operations in Puerto Rico, Acme President Mike Vogel told the local newspaper that the company would get job training funds and "tax code advantages" by moving south. Acme plans to import boot components from India and Brazil and assemble them in Puerto Rico, allowing them to use the "Made in the USA" label that's critical for their market.

U.S. businesses can petition for tax incentives under a 1987 Puerto Rican law that reduces their income taxes to about 5 percent. Then, under Section 936 of the United States tax code, those businesses can repatriate all of their Puerto Rican earnings free of U.S. taxes. That provision costs the U.S. government about \$3 billion a year. The subsidy, which averages \$27,000 a worker each year, is nearly double the average wages paid for each worker.

It has been especially lucrative for the pharmaceutical

*As companies move south for fun in the sun, workers on the mainland get a permanent vacation.*

By David Moberg



industry, which collects half the 936 tax credits but employs only 17 percent of the employees affected. Drug companies collect an average of \$80,000 in tax credits per employee. They transfer their high-profit drug production to Puerto Rico, but write off advertising and research expenses against U.S. taxes. Because of a deal cut with the Internal Revenue Service, the companies also avoid fully paying taxes on extremely valuable "intangibles," such as trademarks and brand names, that are transferred to their Puerto Rican subsidiaries.

When American Home Products shut down its profitable Elkhart, Ind., plant in 1991 to move to Puerto Rico, the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers mounted a multifaceted political and legal challenge, including a \$1 billion lawsuit that was settled last summer for \$24 million, just before it was due to go to trial. The union alleged, among other things, that the company conspired to violate a provision of Puerto Rican law that prohibits tax incentives for runaway plants from the mainland.

The Section 936 tax benefits also figure in another massive tax-financed job scandal. Last fall, the National Labor Committee in Support of Worker and Human Rights in Central America revealed how the Agency for International Development encouraged and subsidized U.S. businesses to shift manufacturing to tax-free export processing zones in Central America and the Caribbean. Clinton and Gore made these subsidies a major campaign issue, and Congress responded with new restrictions on use of foreign aid.

Yet as part of a deal with the Reagan administration to keep the Section 936 benefits, companies agreed to keep funds in Puerto Rican banks that could be used for below-market interest rate loans to Caribbean Basin countries. National Labor Committee Director Charles Kernaghan estimates that out of about \$19 billion of Section 936 money in Puerto Rican banks, nearly \$1 billion has already been loaned and another \$1 billion is "in the pipeline" for U.S. businesses to set up shop in the Caribbean under this program. In some cases, Kernaghan says, apparel companies set up "twin plants" between Puerto Rico and lower-wage areas like the Dominican Republic to evade the minuscule tariffs on the value added by Dominican garment workers when clothes come back to the mainland.

Congress is likely to take up renewed proposals to end Section 936 altogether or replace it with a wage credit system to end the windfalls for companies like the pharmaceuticals. If Puerto Rico

wins statehood, as favored by the new governor, or independence, it would no longer be eligible. Unions, community groups and some members of Congress are likely to advocate strengthening the plant shutdown warning law. The General Accounting Office is expected to report soon that due to loopholes and inadequate enforcement, only one-fifth of workers in layoffs of more than 50 people are given advance notice as stipulated by federal law. Revisions of the law could go further to require severance pay and community reparations. Such changes could also give workers the first shot at buying a plant when the closing does not reflect economic necessity.

McIntyre argues that tax law should be changed to prohibit deferral in reporting foreign profits (especially important for firms in tax havens) and to eliminate tax deductions for U.S. research that supports foreign manufacturing. Most important, he says, the federal government should replace the complex rules that permit companies to shift profits and expenses to different operations to maximize tax advantages with a formula that taxes companies based on sales and assets in the United States.

Changing perverse tax laws is a small, if important, step toward preserving jobs. To change those laws, however, Clinton will have to cut through a thicket of Democratic as well as Republican special interest politicking. Acme Boot workers are waiting to see if they are part of Clinton's American renewal.



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# IN THE ARTS

## Peekaboo

*Hollywood's  
newest "erotic"  
films have an  
antiquated  
sense of  
naughtiness  
and forbidden  
pleasure.*

By Pat Dowell

**T**

here's more sex in the movies these days, and yet somehow less of it too. The two supposedly steamiest current releases, *Body of Evidence* and *Damage*, are scandalous precisely because they hew to conservative notions of eroticism. What's really shocking about them is something nobody pays any attention to: they titillate more with things than with flesh, and they gauge sexual excitement by how much sex costs consenting adults.

While the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) is handing out NC-17 ratings with abandon, the rating board's unwritten standards are still dictated by an almost Victorian prudery. Oral sex is reportedly what was trimmed from Madonna's limp bid for the movie big time, *Body of Evidence*. And a glimpse of Jeremy Irons down by the short hairs has been mentioned as

one of the unmentionables that originally netted *Damage* its most restrictive rating. Both directors, *Body's* Uli Edel and *Damage's* Louis Malle, excised a few seconds of footage in order to be re-rated R in a process the MPAA insists is not censorship.

What remains of the sex scenes in both movies is about as graphic as those movies that pay-cable networks produce for their Saturday night slots. They're as erotically daring as, oh, George Bush might fantasize sex to be. Lots of female nudity, lots of grinding and grimacing, and an antiquated sense of naughtiness and forbidden pleasure.

*Body of Evidence* of course is an "erotic thriller." Madonna plays a woman on trial for teasing and pleasuring a man to death, literally. Willem Dafoe plays her lawyer and her latest conquest; it's their sex scenes that keep *Body of Evidence* from being mistaken for a movie of the week, which in every other respect it is. When he finally succumbs to her dominatrix trip (as "My Way" plays in the background), we'll all presumably get more

of a kick when it's delivered in stiletto heels. He eventually gets the upper hand again, in the time-honored porn tradition, through sodomy, which is still treated as an S-and-M motif in virtually all hetero sex-fiction.

Pleasure doesn't seem to have much to do with sex in *Body of Evidence*. For Madonna's character, Rebecca Carlson, it's work, or as she so succinctly puts it near the end of the movie, "I fuck. It's what I do."

She runs an art gallery, but there's scarcely a mention of that. Rebecca's most visible means of support is her ability to tease millionaires into heart failure shortly after she's written into their wills. When the prosecutor tries to establish that pattern in court, it brings on what really is the movie's most quintessential Madonna moment, which has nothing to do with sex and everything to do with marketing. "Bailiff, clear the courtroom," roars the judge as the testimony starts getting, hmmm, juicy. "Everyone except the reporters," her honor amends, coming to her senses.

Rebecca, like Madonna, values sex for maximum public impact. She's a pale shadow of all those gutsy film noir women of the '40s who were the movies' original material girls. They



**Damage**  
Directed by Louis Malle

**Body of Evidence**  
Directed by Uli Edel

didn't just want sugar daddies to give them things; they wanted the guns and the cash and the power all for themselves.

In Rebecca's fatal attractions, material goods are not just the ends but the means of pleasure—a millionaire's fortune first of all, and then, most memorably, sexual appliances. Nipple clamps get the first nervous snicker from the audience. Broken glass makes a bigger impression than any body part when Madonna pushes Willem Dafoe to lie back on a car hood that is littered with the remains of a broken light bulb. And the most famous scene, of course, features champagne and candlewax.

Ultimately Madonna herself is scarcely more than a tool. Or as the prosecutor (played by Joe Mantegna) instructs the jury and movie audience, "You will see her no differently than a knife, a gun, or any other weapon." It's easier to believe that the prosecutor is voicing the movie's motivating idea than is Rebecca, who whines, "They've taken something good between two people and made it dirty." After all, the prosecutor's version of the story turns out to be right on the money.

*Body of Evidence* is ready-made for parody on *Saturday Night Live*, where Madonna could recently be seen making fun of Sinéad O'Connor's papal protest. *Damage*, based on the Josephine Hart novel about a British official's sexual obsession for his son's fiancée, recalls a TV moment of more traditional vintage. Watching Jeremy Irons and Juliette Binoche lock eyes and hormones across a crowded room (she's just been introduced as his son's new girlfriend) recalls a skit on the old *Carol Burnett Show*. It was a Hollywood parody in which a man and a woman thwacked together, as if two huge magnets were sewn to their lips, whenever they got within five feet of each other. That's exactly what happens to Irons and Binoche in *Damage*. You can almost hear the hum of heavy machinery dragging them to each other over the barely breathing bodies of devoted wife and cherubic son, not to mention posh paneled interiors.

Those interiors have a lot more to do with the story than you might think. When you read the movie poster slogan—"With love comes risk, with obsession comes damage"—it's hard to imagine they don't mean the kind of risk calculated

by Merrill Lynch.

*Damage* measures passion by what it will steal from the government minister (Irons) on his way up. Not that his home seems so happy. (Miranda Richardson powerfully

plays the soon-to-be-vengeful wife, who is comfortable if not ecstatic in her domesticity.) But it is *secure*. The city estate and the great stone pile of a country house, the Range Rover, the antiques, the obsequious staff, the respectful attention of the press—all that is the real focus of the story. It's the privileges he has to lose that certify his love as genuine, and the story itself is so slight as to be inconceivable without the background of wealth. (In a lower-rent movie neighborhood, people in these circumstances commit crimes to make the story go. See entries under Amy Fisher.)



What Anna and Stephen (Binoche and Irons) are doing to the magnificent paneling in Anna's austere elegant apartment is more titillating than what they're doing to each other. And what they're doing to each other is the same sort of Victorian-style sex aerobics that seems so laughable in *Body of Evidence*. Naughty, naughty, naughty destruction of expensive furniture and lamps is what excites these two lovers—and they even have fun with a curtain rod, after moving into a small apartment for privacy's sake.

It's this downscale move that leads to their discovery by Stephen's son and the subsequent tragedy right out of a Dickens novel. *Damage* ends with a scene of Stephen fallen from grace, in a bare tiny flat in some sunny foreign village, bereft of all those *things* he had before. Stephen is seen contemplating a wall-sized blowup of the woman he loved and lost, but the audience has spent two hours contemplating his wealth and comfort as it dribbles away.

It's money that preoccupies the heart in both these movies, no matter how hard Hollywood tries to sell them as sex. Nothing about *Body of Evidence*, in which Madonna serves up sloppy seconds of *Basic Instinct*, is as outrageous as Sharon Stone crossing her legs. (*Instinct* was another sex movie in which wealth and murder subbed for foreplay.) Nothing in *Damage* is as erotic as the decor. It takes a jackpot these days to make a sexpot sizzle. ◀



## IN PRINT

# Wild women, wild men

By Phyllis Eckhaus

I'm wary of men in groups. As a woman, I greet the new "men's movement" with about the same enthusiasm that, as a Jew, I feel for a reunited Germany: If these guys get together, I can't help suspecting that they're probably plotting to get me.

Apparently I'm not alone. *Women Respond to the Men's Movement* practically vibrates with anxiety. This series of essays by feminists challenges the good faith of men who, following Robert Bly's lead, troop off to the woods to reconnect with their "Wild Man" and revitalize their lives. The authors in this articulate and powerful collection argue that the men's movement is a menace: hostile to women, paralyzingly apolitical and ultimately close to fascist in its reverence for authority.

*Iron John*, Bly's seductively simpleminded men's movement bible, contends that men, raised by strong mothers and absent fathers, have suffered "psychic incest" and have become "soft"—"ashamed of being male." Relying on Jungian archetypes, he proposes to renew men's strength through all-male rituals designed to allow men to bond and to "bring the Interior Warrior back to life."

But Bly's initial premise is wrong. Few men are "ashamed of being male." Instead, they are ashamed of not being male enough—strong enough, tough enough. Like the pounding of drums of men's movement rituals, which resonate with one's own heartbeat but drown out

all else, the "self-awareness" promoted by Bly is profoundly self-centered and deaf to dissenting voices. Rosemary

Ruether tellingly compares the men's movement with a hypothetical "white people's movement," which "would claim to solve racism primarily by seeing it as a problem of the wounded white psyche. ... It is acknowledged that white people have sometimes been immature and have used their power aggressively, but this is only because they were insecure in their whiteness." Bly's own consciousness is such that he can refer glowingly to the "positive force" of "patriarchy," a word fraught with less-than-positive connotations for feminists.

Of course, "male-bashing" feminists are the implicit villains of the men's movement. Critic bell hooks cites Bly disciples Robert Moore and Douglas Gillette, who claim "the world is overpopulated ... with tyrannical and abusive little girls pretending to be women. It is time for men—particularly the men of Western civilization—to stop accepting blame for everything that is wrong in the world"—as if the point of feminism is to force men to wallow in guilt.

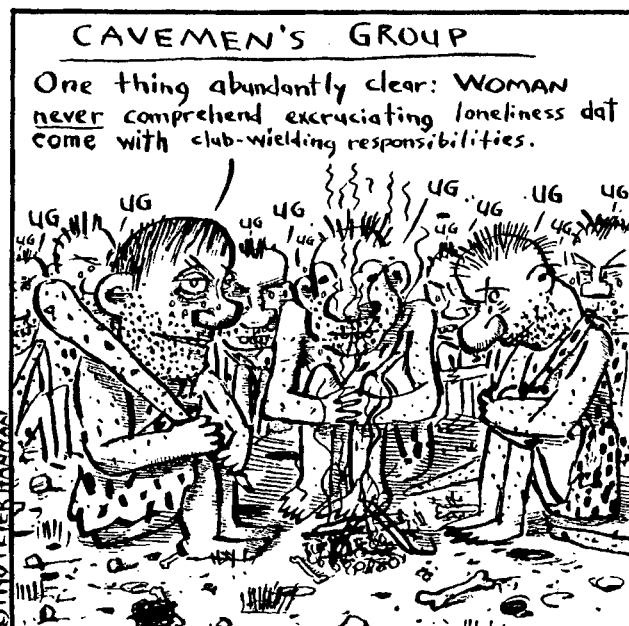
As hooks observes, the men's movement seeks to "depoliticize" the struggle to end sexism by focusing on personal self-actualization, which often serves to divert attention from the very social problems the men's movement acknowledges. (If Robert Bly truly cares about the "father hunger" of boys in single-parent families, why doesn't he instruct his minions to enlist as "Big Brothers"?)

Of course, men's suffering is real, but as essayist Starhawk notes, there's a big difference between the "spiritual malaise" men experience and true oppression. I don't doubt that some men are "succored" by the men's movement: it acknowledges their pain, offers them a ready-made circle of male intimates and provides organizing principles for lives in disarray. I'm equally certain that there are happy campers within the Ku Klux Klan, which offers much the same. The fact that a movement fulfills the personal needs of its followers does not legitimate its philosophy.

Unfortunately, *Iron John* has spawned a slew of oppor-

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**I didn't know that there was any chance of getting my foreskin back. I'm going to call Goldman and ask him about this. Maybe I can**

tunistic and imitative tracts encouraging readers to seek out their "wild" archetypes—their Jung Frankenstein, so to speak. One of the newest and most popular tomes is addressed to women: *Women Who Run with the Wolves*, by Clarissa Pinkola Estés.

If *Iron John* induces paranoia, *Women Who Run with the Wolves* invites parody by virtue of its overripe, underedited prose. Editorial oversights are frequent, and often jolting—such as Estés' proclamation that women should learn from wolves to "cavil in the moonlight." (A Gary Larsen-style cartoon of quibbling lycanthropes comes to mind.)

But the substance of Estés' book is a good deal less amusing than her style. Estés professes a desire to "embolden" women, yet she treats women-hating morality tales as "nourishing" allegories of the damage women inflict on themselves until they connect with their "own intrapsychic power." (She celebrates, for example, "The Red Shoes," the chilling tale of a poor orphan girl who gets fancy footwear and dances up such a storm that an executioner cuts off her feet.) Nowhere does she acknowledge the societal message these tales echo so effectively: women who fail to know their place will face terrible retribution.

Equally disturbing, Estés romanticizes individual development to such an extent that she denies the importance of politics: "A woman cannot make the culture more aware by saying 'Change,'" she claims, asserting that "dynamic self-acceptance and self-esteem are what begin to change attitudes in the culture." For someone who worships pack animals like wolves, her hostility to collective action is nothing short of bizarre.

Both Bly and Estés presume a pre-industrial utopia where men were men, women were women and everyone was happy. They deny the oppressive force of male power and dominance. Both prescribe smugly apolitical remedies for the readers' modern malaise and reinforce the status quo. But Estés' book, addressed to women, is merely a dead end; Bly's men's movement manual is dangerous.

Phyllis Eckhaus is the co-founder of the Brooklyn Anti-Bias Response Network, a neighborhood organization confronting hate crimes.

Editorial and ad copy from *Wingspan*, a "journal of the male spirit."

# The education business

By David Futrelle

**T**hose looking for clues about Bill Clinton's forthcoming educational policies would do well to peruse this curiously contradictory book, now advertised with an admiring blurb from the president. Like Clinton himself, the authors of *Thinking for a Living* combine a vague rhetoric of renewal with a muddled program of reforms, hobbled by a steadfast commitment to the desires

(and even the language) of business and to the anti-ideological politics of bipartisanship. The book compellingly argues the importance of education to our economic survival, but its notion of education reform, borrowed heavily from the current vogue of "quality" in business management circles, is less than compelling.

The authors' indictment of the current malaise—in education and the economy in general—is depressingly convincing. They argue that attempts to make American firms "competitive" with their overseas rivals by lowering wages offer only short-term gains; we may stave off layoffs by a few months or years, but at the cost of driving

our standard of living into the pits. Like many others, Marshall and Tucker (respectively, a former secretary of labor in the Carter years and an academic educational reformer) look to education to save us from the current mess. Instead of trying to compete on the world market by lowering wages and driving down the dollar, Marshall and Tucker suggest instead that we attempt to make our educational system competitive with those of our most formidable rivals, Germany and Japan. Only by adopting the "high-

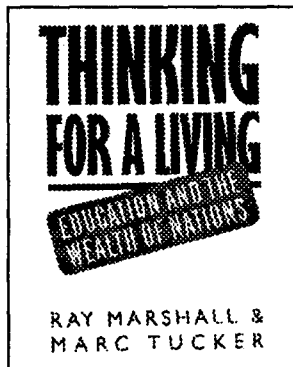
skills/high-wage" strategy of our First World rivals will we be able to avoid a Third World future.

It's an argument with a certain merit, though the revitalization of education (however desirable in itself) is hardly the solution to our economic malaise. The book's real problems begin when the authors move from criticism to their proposed solutions, an odd mixture of progressive and regressive. On the one hand, Marshall and Tucker denounce the savage inequalities of the current system and, even more encouragingly, argue against the notion of educational "choice," pointing out that a market solution to the problems of education will simply exacerbate these inequalities. They advocate raising the minimum wage, providing day care and health insurance for all, and other such programs.

Unfortunately, the authors are not content to stay in such sane territory; they overwhelm their subject with the vacuous clichés of business boosterism: "total quality," "excellence," "leadership through quality." They propose restructuring the schools to stress "high performance" for all students (whatever this means) and gauging progress with frequent national exams (however that might work). Worse, Marshall and Tucker borrow more from business than the language of boosterism, envisioning schools as little more than training centers to fit the needs of modern business. Of course, as the book points out, the present program of "mass-produced" education was designed, to a large extent, to serve the interests of business in a previous age; the failures of the present system grow out of its continuing acquiescence to business philosophy. If the American educational system has hobbled itself by adapting with too much enthusiasm to the needs of business, why should we expect business methods now to save the system?

Equally troubling, the authors' notion of political reform is hardly democratic. They hope to assemble experts to "set clear goals" for the production of knowledge, much as one might set goals for the production of cars, and then simply to communicate these goals to an acquiescent public. There is no notion in their book of the dynamics of politics or, really, of the power of entrenched interests. Our educational system is failing not simply because Americans as a whole lack the political will to challenge its problems. America has "chosen" the low-wage, low-skills route to economic bankruptcy in large part because this particular solution, such as it is, appeals to the pocketbooks of those with power—the low cost and lamentable inequality of the educational system keeps taxes down, and America's downward-spiraling wages are only downward-spiraling for those who aren't already rich.

As a result, the book's calls for equality are likely to be swamped by its invocation of "quality." I suspect that all Clinton and his supremely cautious advisers will pick out of this book (if anything) are its more gimmicky and least costly proposals for reform. A real solution to our current dilemma will take a far more expansive kind of politics than Marshall and Tucker—or Clinton—are prepared to advocate. Real change in the educational system has to come



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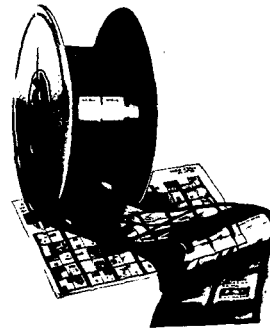
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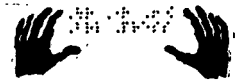
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*Continued from page 40*

work of the constitutional convention in 1787—"I have lived, Sir, a long time, and the longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth—that God governs in the affairs of men." Only when late 20th-century Americans can bend their knees as did this illustrious ancestor, Barton concludes, will our woes be over.

That's rich. As the context for Franklin's actions suggests, however, there is little connection between his pious expressions and the political ends he pursued on the convention floor. Franklin's request for prayer in Philadelphia, for example, came just before he brokered the so-called Great Compromise, a political deal that effectively sanctioned the maintenance of slavery in the new nation, this in the City of Brotherly Love.

Neither did invoking God lead to moral ends in Franklin's amorous relations with women, married and unmarried. That Poor Richard sired a staggering number of illegitimate children on both sides of the Atlantic gives new meaning to the term Founding Father.

In his strikingly unbuttoned life, in his marked ability to commingle impiety and piety, Franklin subverts Barton's invocation of a mythic past in which only resolute Christians inhabited this godly land. That that past is a fantasy contains a warning, too: Turning back the clock to a time that never existed, promoting nostalgia as the only acceptable way to comprehend the present, will never resolve the massively complex social problems that lie before us. ◀

Cher Miller teaches American history at Trinity University.

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# IN THE END

## God forbid

By Char Miller

When I attended elementary school in the late '50s and early '60s, the state of Connecticut, through the local school board, forced me to recite the Lord's Prayer as part of opening exercises. It was one of the highlights of my day.

But it wasn't a pious one. No, indeed. For when the teacher turned to lead us in prayer, that's when the fun would begin. Some kids specialized in mumbling in cadence, increasing or muffling their voices in accord with their own sense of rhythm. Others selectively emphasized odd words at odd times in hopes of throwing their peers off pace. (It worked.) Still others imaginatively rewrote the prayer itself, experimenting in the gentle art of punning. The only moment of concord for this motley chorus of Catholic, Protestant and Jew was our resounding "Amen," a veritable shout that signalled the real beginning of our educational endeavors.

That subversive memory surfaced recently while reading post-election analyses reporting that Christian fundamentalists, having failed to capture national levers of power, were now targeting local school board elections as a means of controlling that important arena of American political life, and that one of their chief ambitions was to mandate school prayer. (See story on page 20.) Surely, I thought with my moment of classroom hijinks in mind, these people can't be serious.

But they are. A key player in this attempt to Christianize the blackboard jungle is Texan David Barton. Barton trumpets "the restoration and rebuilding of the values on which America was built." Christians, he affirms, can "take back" their country and in so doing put themselves on a fast track to the millennium. All this through the power of prayer. In his book, *The Myth of Separation*, and especially in his recent video, *America's Godly Heritage*, Barton offers a remarkable paean to prayer's ability to solve not just the many ills of public education but all social maladies currently afflicting the body politic.

Central to Barton's argument is his belief that the Supreme Court's decision to strike down school prayer in the early '60s unleashed an era of moral decay and social decadence unrivalled in American history. This assertion, of course, carries with it a number of questionable assumptions, not the least of which is that school prayer was necessarily and solely responsible for a hypothetical pre-'60s golden age during which, as one of Barton's disciples recently put it, American "achievement, morality, productivity, stability and reputation" were second to none.

We are asked to make a similar leap of faith on the matter of that slippery slope down which we have apparently slid since the mid-'60s. Outlawing school prayer, Barton and other Christian fundamentalists contend, not only caused the escalation in divorce and adultery but generated increases in the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, too, including gonorrhea and AIDS. It accounts as well for the rise in violent crimes among adults and in gang membership among our youth. On the decline—SAT scores and the nation's once formidable reputation for excellence. All this could have been avoided, Barton's many graphs in his video appear to demonstrate, had we not lost the ability to pray aloud at our desks.

Are we seriously to believe that school prayer was once a kind of moral zipper? That it, and it alone, restrained the American libido? Of course not, and who better to demolish this fallacy than that enlightened figure who Barton lovingly evokes as a paragon of pietistic virtue—Benjamin Franklin. Barton is captivated by Franklin's call for daily prayers to kick off the

*Continued on page 39*

